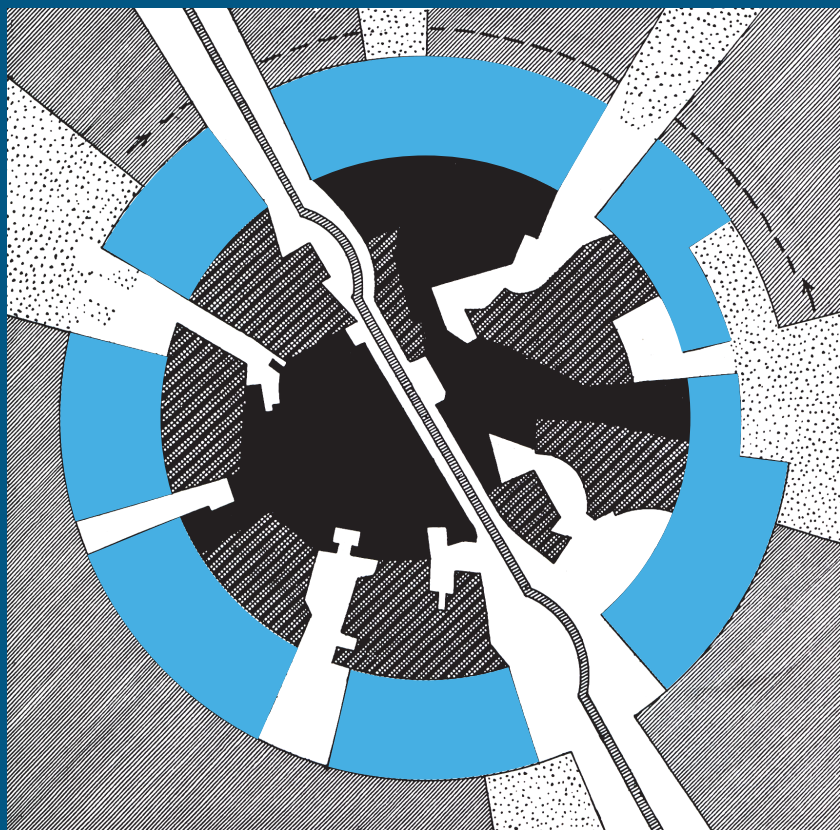


RACES TO MODERNITY



**METROPOLITAN ASPIRATIONS
IN EASTERN EUROPE, 1890-1940**

*Edited by Jan C. Behrends
and Martin Kohlrausch*

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**Jan C. Behrends
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1. Races to Modernity: Metropolitan Aspirations in Eastern Europe, 1890–1940

An Introduction

Jan C. Behrends and Martin Kohlrausch

In his renowned “Iron Curtain” speech—delivered on March 5, 1946, in Fulton, Missouri—Winston Churchill evoked the “famous cities” of Central and Eastern Europe. Alerting the distant American public to the division of Europe, Churchill listed what he believed to be household names like Bucharest, Sofia, Budapest, and Warsaw to demonstrate that familiar places were besieged by Joseph Stalin. Indirectly, Churchill was echoing a process that had taken place in the decades preceding his speech, a process that had confirmed the metropolitan aspirations of these cities, their European appeal, and their global relevance.

The growth of cities and urban life is at the heart of the modern experience in Europe. Metropolitan cities such as London and Paris were certainly forerunners in this development: their rapid expansion began in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Large parts of Central and Eastern Europe underwent urbanization and industrialization with considerable delay. But beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, the towns in the Romanov and Habsburg empires as well as in the Balkans grew into cities and metropolitan areas. They changed at an astonishing pace. This transformation has long been interpreted as an attempt to overcome the economic and cultural backwardness of the region and to catch up to Western Europe.¹ The chapters published in this volume confirm the importance of the Western model as well as the influence of international

¹ Berend, *History Derailed*, 228–34.

experts on city planning at the periphery of Europe. In addition, this volume presents an alternative perspective that aims to understand the genesis of Eastern European cities with a metropolitan character or metropolitan aspirations as a process *sui generis*. In order to analyze the history of Eastern Europe's large cities, the contributors to this volume take into account the peculiarities of the region—that is, a wide range of factors that cannot exclusively be subsumed under the label of backwardness. The decades from 1890 until the beginning of World War II are a period of crucial importance because the Eastern European urbanization process—including the mass migration of peasants to towns and cities—did not end or slow down like in the West after 1918. Throughout the twentieth century, evolving metropolitan cities such as Moscow, Warsaw, or Belgrade remained moldable entities to a much higher degree than their Western European counterparts. Even if in some cities in the region modernization had set in earlier, it was now that the reflection of one's own status reached new heights—in mediatized exchange, in numerous expert travels, or in placing the city within the discourse on national and imperial renewal. In this context, precisely the perception of one's own backwardness led to recurring initiatives to recast the cities, while always keeping in mind Western European models. At the same time the emergence of modern urbanism in the years after 1900 held a particular promise in the eastern half of the continent.

By using the terms modernity, modernization, and modernism, the research in this volume points to a specific European tradition that has in many ways rightly been criticized. However, it seems difficult—if not impossible—to analyze the great transformation, the profound changes that unfolded in Eastern Europe from the 1890s on without discussing the concepts that highlight the dynamics that led to the reshaping of Eastern European cities and society. This is not to imply, however, that a common goal existed or that the cities studied were on a linear path of Westernization. Rather, local conditions shaped the changes. Still, the process of change triggered in politics, society, and urban life can, for our purposes, be called modernization. The term modernization has often been associated with a reflection of change and the idea of a moldable future. The latter is a particularly significant idea in the eastern part

of Europe. While urban backwardness could be found also in large parts of Southern and even Western Europe well into the twentieth century, the idea of catching up to a “European standard” merged with general ideas of transforming the region politically and (re)establishing nation states.

There is a general consensus in the field that modernization—globally, but also in the Eastern European context—accelerated during the *fin de siècle*. Thus, the end of the nineteenth century can be interpreted as the start of a dramatic era that has been called *classical* or *high modernity*, an era of unprecedented upheaval stretching roughly from the 1880s to the 1960s.² With regard to cities, modernity is the period during which mass migration, technological change, and economic growth brought about a new urban condition. The technical and scientific modernization of the cityscape did not come to a conclusion, however, but rather turned into an essential part of this condition itself.³

It has also rightly been criticized that both the periodization and the commonly quoted features of “classical” modernization reflect a Western European reality and that they fail to describe different paths to modernity.⁴ Yet those engaged in the discourse on urban change in the cities scrutinized in this volume had a rather clear notion of “European modernity.” The Western path served as a model—albeit sometimes intentionally employed to overcome opposition at home.⁵ This constant reflection illuminates European modernity as well as the specific modernization experiences of the Eastern European cities.⁶ It is against this background that modernism, also as a mode of comparing oneself with Western examples, became so important. To illustrate this context, we use the meta-

² See, for example, Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*, 451–87; Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt*, 109–16; Herbert, “Europe in High Modernity,” 5–21; for a critical reflection, see Raphael, “Ordnungsmuster der ‘Hochmoderne,’” 73–91; for a perspective beyond the late nineteenth century, see Toulmin, *Cosmopolis*; for more on the process of territorialization, see Maier, “Consigning the Twentieth Century to History,” 807–31.

³ Levin, *Urban Modernity*.

⁴ Eisenstadt, *Multiple Modernities*.

⁵ Kloczkowski et al., *Drogi do Nowoczesności*.

⁶ Wood, *Becoming Metropolitan*.

phor “races” to modernity to depict a competition that was not imposed from above but resulted from the dynamics that were unfolding in the region itself.

Modernism, the third crucial term here, is a specific style of architecture and urban planning that evolved during the first half of the twentieth century and became an influential transnational movement.⁷ Notwithstanding the ongoing debates about its merits and normative presumptions, modernism points to an important specificity of interpreting urban development. While modern painting and Taylorist production technology might only at third glance have something in common, cities obviously exhibit the whole range of modern features. Modernity and architecture were almost intrinsically linked.⁸ Aesthetic and technological developments and decisions went hand in hand, with modernist architects often construing themselves not so much as builders, but as harbingers and producers of modern conditions.

In its deliberate and fashioned departure from the development of art and architecture, this very modernism had a particular appeal in the eastern part of Europe.⁹ The history of the Eastern European cities with metropolitan aspirations is part of the development of the modern era while, in a more narrow sense, it is part and parcel of the history of modernist architecture and planning. Simplifying matters, we might claim that urban planning in Eastern Europe had to solve the problems of the nineteenth century using the knowledge, concepts, and aesthetics of the early twentieth century. In this sense, our approach promises not only insights into the history of Eastern Europe, but also constitutes a part of the very story of modernity and modernism. The entry into the modern age was full of promise and perspective, full of hubris and destruction. These ambivalences of the modern condition by no means escaped the contemporaries. Even the most ardent city planners and the most optimistic politicians were clearly reacting to the enormous challenges of the modern age.

⁷ See the classical works by Berman, *All That Is Solid*; and Gay, *Modernism*.

⁸ Heynen, *Architecture and Modernity*.

⁹ Vidler, *Histories of the Immediate Present*; Tournikiotis, *Historiography*; and Lenger, *Metropolen der Moderne*.

The East European City in a European Perspective

The dawn of modernity in Europe was marked by the beginning of the end of agrarian society, the rise of industry, and urban expansion. Since the nineteenth century, historians and sociologists such as Max Weber have allotted European cities a special role in this process. In the early twentieth century, Georg Simmel described the inhabitants of the European metropolis as the archetypical modern individuals. These notions underline the significance of the European city as the cradle of bourgeois self-determination, an emerging sphere of economic power, and a space of social balance.¹⁰ Thus far, urban history has tended to focus mostly on examples from Western Europe that were interpreted as examples of a general development and as typical cases.¹¹ Eastern European cities were often presented as special cases.¹² Although no consensus has been reached with regard to the characteristics and the geographical range of the European city, scholars agree that the attempt to define a specifically European urban development significantly contributes to focusing the discussion. This perspective, however, bears the risk of marginalizing important developments in Europe's urban history. This volume examines—with a focus on the Eastern European context—a regional manifestation of the European city that can also function as a sort of test case for the concept itself. How can the study of Eastern European urbanity enhance our understanding of the modern European city?

¹⁰ Siebel, *Die europäische Stadt*; Kaelble, "Die Besonderheiten der europäischen Stadt," 256–74.

¹¹ For an analysis of the European city that focuses exclusively on the West, see Lees et al., *Cities*; and more recently Lampugnani, *Die Stadt*; more nuanced in geographical terms is Lenger et al., *Die europäische Stadt*; focused on Eastern European cities, but for a rather broad approach, see Krzoska et al., *Stadtleben*; Stachel et al., *Urbane Kulturen*; Goehrke et al., *Städte im östlichen Europa*; for a brief reflection on Eastern Europe and the European city during the postwar period, see Wagenaar, *Happy*, 446–90.

¹² Hamm, *The City in Late Imperial Russia*; Brower, *The Russian City*; for an emphasis on the imperial dimensions of Russian urbanity, see Steinberg et al., *Kul'tury gorodov Rossiiskoi imperii*.

This volume includes cases that cover a geographical area from Scandinavia across Russia and Central Europe to the Balkans. In the nineteenth century, cities such as Helsinki, Warsaw, Belgrade, or Athens were undoubtedly at the periphery of Europe. However, from 1890 on they were seized by modernity's processes of accelerated social change.¹³ This acceleration was by no means limited to places like London, Chicago, or Berlin. Within a short period of time Eastern European towns had to grapple with similar modern problems—from housing to migration, from poverty to ethnic and social tensions.¹⁴ Adapting to modern life, accepting its perils and enjoying its pleasures became a task for generations of new city dwellers.¹⁵ The peasant culture of agrarian society continued to influence everyday life in these cities; many villages existed within the urban realm and were barely concealed by modern façades. Modernity and tradition were only a heartbeat apart: in the Eastern European metropolis they constantly overlapped and interacted, which is characteristic of the entire area studied here.

Many of these features also hold true for, say, Spanish cities; but it is the experience of belonging to an empire that binds together the Eastern European cases. Of course, there are exceptions to this assumption. Therefore, cities like Helsinki or Athens—often associated with other regions, but sharing the geopolitical background and legacy of large empires—are also included in this volume.

This volume follows a broad chronological perspective. First, all the cities discussed here were subject to rapid and continuing transformation from 1890 on. They stand for the urbanization of societies that had traditionally been dominated by agriculture and peasant life. Second, all these cities were affected by the political turmoil and nation building that profoundly reshaped the eastern half of the continent. The decline of the Ottoman Empire and the fall of the Romanov and Habsburg dynasties created a new political landscape: nation states emerged in the post-imperial realm.¹⁶ Towns

¹³ Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*, 451–87.

¹⁴ Janatková et al., *Wohnen in der Großstadt*.

¹⁵ Neuberger, *Hooliganism*; Wood, *Becoming Metropolitan*; Steinberg, *Petersburg Fin de Siècle*.

¹⁶ Leonhard et al., *Empires und Nationalstaaten*.

that until then had been provincial centers became capitals of independent countries.¹⁷ Their new governments felt the need to represent national power and legitimacy, both of which were to be demonstrated in their capital cities.¹⁸ In order to improve their capitals, they wholeheartedly embraced the age of planning, which had already conquered the western part of the continent.¹⁹ Third, the volume argues that the process of accelerated modernization that changed the face of Eastern Europe relied heavily on the state.²⁰ While the urban boom in Britain or Germany was mostly a consequence of economic growth, much of the expansion of Eastern European cities took place in times of uncertainty and crisis after the collapse of empires. Where an affluent bourgeoisie was lacking, the state had to invest into the future of its metropolitan cities. Thus, modernization in Eastern Europe generally relied far more heavily on state policies, and these policies were often driven by the modern ideologies of socialism and nationalism. The strong role of the state also marks a continuum across the 1917–1918 divide: it existed in the imperial setting and in the nation states of the interwar era. In comparison to the state, civil society and the economy remained weak. But its relative strength placed many burdens on the state as the agent of modernity. The overstretching of state resources could then, paradoxically, make a strong state look weak.

The studies in this volume focus on the interplay of political, cultural, and infrastructural factors in what we call the race to modernity. The metaphor of a “race” not only alludes to the different speeds of modernization. It is also intended to describe a deliberate and reflected process, the self-conception of these cities’ elites and actors, their striving to become “modern” and “European”—two terms that were often used synonymously during the period in question. Moreover, the terms refer to both the aspired “finish” of West-

¹⁷ Blau et al., *Shaping the Great City*; Alofsin, *When Buildings Speak*; Gunzburger Makaš et al., *Capital Cities*. See Prokopovych, “Introduction to Section ‘East European Cities,’” 28–31.

¹⁸ Bartetzky et al., *Neue Staaten—neue Bilder*; Purchla et al., *Nation*.

¹⁹ Sonne, *Representing the State*; Gordon, *Capital Cities*; Ward, *Planning the Twentieth-Century City*; for a comparative perspective, see Bodenschatz et al., *Stadtvisionen*.

²⁰ Turnock, *The Economy of East Central Europe*.

ern-style metropolitan cities and the competition among “rivals” running on the same track.

Capitals like Warsaw, Kaunas, or Helsinki faced not only infrastructural challenges. They were also the stages on which new states had to prove their legitimacy, including the construction of representative government buildings, national libraries, and theaters, as well as solutions to social problems that persisted in the region. Urban development was equated to nation building. This was especially pronounced in the urban public sphere in Eastern Europe.²¹ In a post-imperial setting and in a region characterized by ethnic diversity, this could also mean the nationalization of urban space. Therefore, the shaping of the Eastern European metropolis can be understood as a process in which architecture followed ideology; a process that to a striking degree linked urban planning to far-reaching promises of an improved human condition and a prosperous national future.²² In the accompanying discourse the past, painted overly black, is contrasted with the improvements of the national present or future.

Finally, this volume pursues the question of possible caesuras beyond the 1917–1918 mark. The social and cultural developments of the cities in question were not solely shaped by political ruptures, but also by social processes of the *longue durée*. In this regard, we must take into consideration the legacies of the multinational European empires—the institutional and communication structures—which did not suddenly cease to exist with the end of World War I, but rather determined future developments in manifold ways. The problems of the pre-1914 era were often amplified by the expectations of national or, in the Russian case, revolutionary elites. With the outbreak of World War II, this era abruptly came to an end. Extermination warfare, ethnic cleansing, the Holocaust, and totalitarian dictatorship reshaped the region in a multitude of ways. Urban history was overshadowed by the history of the European catastrophe, and the race to modernity turned into a voyage to barbarism. Therefore, it seems plausible to pursue the investigation across the 1917–1918 divide, but to limit the perspective to the interwar pe-

²¹ Hofmann et al., *Stadt und Öffentlichkeit*.

²² Cf. the many examples on Eastern Europe in Bartetzky et al., *Urban Planning*.

riod. After 1945 cities such as Helsinki, Belgrade, Moscow, or Athens found themselves in different political contexts. In much of Eastern Europe, the pluralism of the interwar era had to make way for the Soviet empire. Although one could argue that many of the phenomena observed in this book—urban growth, dependence on the state, the tension between peasant tradition and modern life—extended well into the post-World War II era, a comparative study of the entire Eastern European region ranging from the Baltics to the Balkans seems less justifiable and more problematic. In any case, it would require another volume.

Given the complexities of the questions raised here, our definition of metropolitan cities is a pragmatic one.²³ Arguably cities like Zagreb or Kaunas lack many characteristics associated with the term. Yet we still believe that they share decisive features with the more illustrious examples. They turned into focal points of national, governmental, and public attention in the period we are investigating and thus underwent the deep transformations we are attempting to trace. In their national and regional contexts, they became examples of modernity and metropolitan life.

The Social and the National Question in the Eastern Metropolis

Without doubt, the advent of modernity, with its acceleration of social change and rapid disintegration of tradition, created numerous new challenges for Eastern Europe cities. Modernization also highlighted the structures of the region, that is the unequal distribution of wealth and opportunities and the question of ethnic diversity in the post-imperial realm in the age of nationalization.²⁴ The more stagnant social order of the feudal age which had been regulated through estates lost its significance in the course of the nineteenth century. The social body of the growing cities was much more complex—in political, economic, and cultural terms—than the village or the small town had been. A peasant who moved to the city

²³ For an illuminating discussion of metropolitan cities in general, see Zimmermann, *Die Zeit der Metropolen*.

²⁴ Hirschhausen, *Die Grenzen der Gemeinsamkeit*.

did not, of course, turn into an urban dweller overnight. On the contrary, the new urban settlers carried many traits of rural life into the emerging cities. Further, a migrant would experience the fluidity and confusion of modern city life. Modernity's complexity could lead to troubling experiences and pessimistic visions. Therefore, the Eastern European city was a place where new cultures and identities developed. Migrants as well as the elite had to position themselves socially and culturally in the urban environment; they had to learn to deal with a state that was much more present in the urban space than in the vast openness of the countryside and they adopted modern ideologies like socialism or nationalism. Finally, city residents had to take sides in the conflicts that marred their communities.

In his contribution on the urban scene of prerevolutionary St. Petersburg, Mark D. Steinberg explores the meaning of modernity in the Eastern European metropolis.²⁵ He shows how contemporaries were bewildered by the modern age and by the notion of modernity itself, by its complexities, contingencies, and particularities. His "modern man," as described in the press, seems much less confident than Georg Simmel's famous flâneur, who was modeled on a citizen of Berlin. Steinberg demonstrates how a generation of journalists reflected the inconsistency of the modern experience. To a distressed urban public, the modern metropolis was driven by the "spirit of deceit." Steinberg's examples from St. Petersburg serve to illustrate that Eastern Europeans by no means naively embraced modernity. On the contrary, the sophisticated observers of fin-de-siècle St. Petersburg had few illusions about the pitfalls of the modern existence. In contrast to many other contributions in this volume, the pessimistic outlook of the cultural critics creates a fascinating counterpoint to the modern visions of architects and planners. Modernity on the level of Petersburg's streets was rather different from the bird's eye perspective of the great plans.

In her chapter on pre-1917 Kiev, Faith Hillis emphasizes the divisions within a multiethnic city. While official imperial culture viewed Kiev as the cradle of Russian civilization, everyday life in

²⁵ On St. Petersburg's road to modernity, see Clark, *Petersburg*; and Schlögel, *Das Laboratorium der Moderne*.

the city was marked by escalating tensions between its inhabitants. Social and ethnic tensions intertwined in a town where the elite were often Russian, German, or Jewish, and the workers came from the Ukrainian countryside. Thus, interwoven social, ethnic, and religious issues were at the heart of the conflict. Kiev's example illustrates the tension created by the progressing nationalization of the population. Although the countryside had long known social conflicts between the noble lords and their subjects, the combination of social and ethnic tensions in the dense space of the modern city had a new quality. Pogroms, upheavals, and revolutions often resulted in protracted fighting in the public sphere of the city. But even everyday life proved to be conflict-laden. Nationalists and radical politicians used pamphlets and newspapers to mobilize their followers. Reading rooms, mass rallies, and various forms of association were used by left- and right-wing parties as well as by ethnic groups. The high degree of organization observed by Hillis also forces us to rethink our notion of civil society: a high degree of civic involvement is by no means desirable per se. On the contrary, political mobilization can destroy civil values and turn the city into an ideological battleground.²⁶

Entering the modern age, many Eastern European cities did not have a clear national identity. They were home to different ethnic groups and reflected the heterogeneity of multinational empires. Cities were not only located in borderlands, but rather were borderlands themselves, a space in which every quarter could host a different group and where the same building or institution could have conflicting meanings to various groups and individuals. Before 1914, some of these conflicts were overshadowed by the imperial order. Using the example of Vilnius, which in 1920 after more than a century of Russian rule became Polish Wilno, Theodore Weeks shows how the Polish nation state attempted to impose its order and culture on the urban space. The Polish republic tried to cleanse the city of the remnants of imperial rule and emphasize its Polishness. In Polonized Wilno there was little room for the city's Lithuanian past or for its Jewish inhabitants with their vibrant religious culture. Although it did not resort to violence, the Polish state nevertheless

²⁶ For the striking modernity of Kiev, see Makaryk et al., *Modernism in Kiev*.

attempted to erase the diversity that had characterized the city and create a situation in which assimilation to Polish culture became almost inevitable. Where the state invested into modern development—such as the university—it did so to strengthen the process of nationalization. Wilno also serves as an example of a more circumspect embrace of modernity. Lacking the funds for modern overhaul or reconstruction of the city, the Polish state resorted to history in order to legitimize its rule. Thus, provincial cities often pursued a different path than capitals, which were to become showcases of modernity.

Tsarist Moscow, although ethnically more homogeneous than Kiev, was deeply divided by social and cultural boundaries. The peasants turned Muscovites had little in common either with the nobility that still expected to rule the city or with the nascent merchant class. Jan C. Behrends shows that Lev Tolstoy was not alone in his perception of modern city life as a moral scandal: the question—“What is to be done?”—that the writer posed in 1886, remained central for urban thought from tsarism to Stalinism. In Moscow the tsarist administration was divided between those who chose to ignore the challenges of rapid urban growth and those who attempted to engage citizens in their attempts at social reform. After the Revolution, the Bolsheviks applied radical solutions to the city’s problems—first the redistribution of property, then the attempt to violently reshape the urban landscape—but they were fighting the same battles that had been fought prior to the Revolution. Neither the cultural division between peasants and city dwellers nor the housing problem was resolved. In many cases, they erected modern façades to hide both their failure and the cost of their violent approach.

Urbanism Goes East: The Development of Capitals, Infrastructure, and Planning

After gaining independence, nascent nation states were eager to show that they had better means to improve urban life than their imperial predecessors. Their legitimacy largely rested on their ability to meet the challenges of modernization. From the time of the

French Revolution, the example of Paris—the city that had to be remade into a proud modern capital—loomed large. It triggered the desire of the national elite to recast their capitals in a Western form. This process began in the Balkans, where the retreat of Ottoman rule led to the first wave of post-imperial nation building. Using the examples of Athens, Belgrade, and Sofia, Eleni Bastéa, Dubravka Stojanović, and Elitza Stanoeva analyze the attempts of these cities to overcome the legacy of the Ottoman Empire, to shed an “oriental” past, and to transform into modern European capitals. After reestablishing the Greek state in 1832, the development of Athens quickly became one of the major goals of its monarchs. The ambition to create a “model kingdom of the East,” that is an outpost of Western modernity that would be a lighthouse in a “dark area,” was to become manifest in a capital that had once been the cradle of Western civilization and, according to the vision of the nineteenth century, had to regain its lost greatness. From the beginning, Western experts were involved in the process and Western capitals constantly served as a point of reference. The article traces the impact of the 1896 Olympic Games, the first of the modern era, on the development of Athens. Bastéa argues that the games served as a lesson in modern living. Foreign visitors could convince themselves of Greece’s achievements and acknowledged the nation’s standing among European nations. Still, the author argues, there remained a tension between the European façades and the traditional lifestyle of the inhabitants. She dubs this the experience of “dissociative modernity.”

Certainly cities across Eastern Europe shared this experience, for example Belgrade, which became the capital of Serbia in 1841. Stojanović explores how following the wars of the 1870s, the Serbian state initiated the city’s modernization. Her contribution points to the deficits rather than the achievements of state-sponsored development. Political instability and infighting led to constant protraction. The development of the metropolis was taken hostage by political actors; modern politics hindered modern development.

In 1879, decades after Athens and Belgrade were established as national capitals, Sofia became the capital of Bulgaria. Following the Greek example, the Bulgarians aspired to rid their city of the relics of Ottoman rule. While the oriental city was seen as unor-

dered and unhealthy, the new national metropolis would be characterized by Haussmannian proportions. However, Stanoeva points out the discrepancy between the planners' aspirations and the actual transformation of the city. Effectively, the renovation of urban space proceeded along national lines: the depopulated former Turkish quarter served as a laboratory for the modernization of Sofia. Vacated by its former imperial inhabitants, it could be restructured, while private property conflicted with the state's planning in other areas. Again, European specialists and expertise played a significant role. Stanoeva shows that Bulgarian elite began to contest this foreign dominance at the beginning of the twentieth century. They looked to their nation's past in order to develop an "authentic" style of Bulgarian architecture. Their growing self-confidence allowed them to contest Western concepts of modernity. Parallel to developments in Germany or the Soviet Union, the aggressive nationalism of the 1930s attempted to rid urban planning of its international dimension. The cooperative spirit of the first decade after World War I suffered in the "age of extremes."

In his contribution, Martin Kohlrausch uses the example of Warsaw to outline the transnational dimensions of urban planning in the interwar period. His study shows how a generation of progressive architects and planners united in the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) discovered Eastern European cities and fashioned them as a tabula rasa where their radical designs could be applied with greater ease than in the West. What has been called the golden age of urban planning in Europe was closely connected with the rise of CIAM—the organization provided a platform for modernist architects from various countries.²⁷ After the Soviet Union abandoned its cooperation with this group in 1931 and chose to pursue its own road to building the "socialist city," Poland became a focus of the organization and attracted international attention. Kohlrausch shows how planners attempted to overcome the perceived urban crisis of the country by means of radical planning; the old Warsaw was to make way for a Central European metropolis as outlined in the 1934 *Warszawa funkcjonalna* master plan. Warsaw's dramatic growth called for radical solutions, and

²⁷ Misa, "Appropriating the International Style," 71–95.

urban planning—as offered by modernist architects—seemed to hold the solution for the social problems that accompany rapid urbanization. Only through planning could Warsaw’s race to modernity be successful, and the process of gathering expertise was a genuinely transnational endeavor. *Warszawa funkcjonalna* illustrates that urban development in Eastern Europe was highly dependent on the state. The form of statehood was, however, also crucial: albeit aesthetically more conventional, the Stalinist master plan for the reconstruction of Moscow, published in 1936, introduced a form of violent modernization that was hardly imaginable in previous decades. Its implementation, the use of slave labor for urban development, was only feasible in a totalitarian state.²⁸

Ostmoderne? East European Modernism

Certain elements of Eastern European modernism have become part of the very notion of what is modern. In this context, one could mention certain images of Russian constructivism or Alvar Aalto’s design and architecture.²⁹ Steven A. Mansbach triggered a lively discussion about Eastern modernism in the fields of architecture and art history.³⁰ It allows for an interdisciplinary perspective on urban development and covers a number of phenomena, such as professional communication and interaction between international discourses and their manifestation in the framework of a city or nation state. This shows how closely the aesthetic dimension of modernism was intertwined with political and social modernization in the new states of the “East”—albeit in complex, sometimes contradictory ways. This debate is moreover an exciting attempt to overcome the notion of a simple west-to-east direction in the trans-

²⁸ Bodenschatz et al., *Städtebau im Schatten Stalins*.

²⁹ Buchli, *Archaeology*; Černichov et al., *Jakov Černichov: Sowjetischer Architekt der Avantgarde*; and Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, *Konstruktivistische Internationale Schöpferische Arbeitsgemeinschaft*.

³⁰ Mansbach, *Modern Art in Eastern Europe*; Lesnikowski, *East European Modernism*; Benson, *Central European Avant-gardes*; for individual countries, see Mahečić, *Moderna arhitektura*; Blagojević et al., *Modernism in Serbia*; Popescu, *Le style national Roumain*; and Anděl et al., *The New Vision*.

fer of knowledge and intellectual fashions. We believe the term “eastmodern” can also be applied to our understanding of the urban history of Eastern Europe in a broader sense. It helps to explain the intriguing phenomenon of how the region’s deficits—actual or perceived—provided a particularly fertile ground for modernism. To the degree that modern architects depended on the state in absence of bourgeois clients, the new states also depended on such experts of modernism to establish the image—but also the social infrastructure—they needed so desperately.³¹

Laura Kolbe shows how the Finnish capital Helsinki, prior to 1914 a provincial town at the periphery of the Russian Empire, was turned into a symbol of Eastern European modernism. Although the city preserved its historical center and imperial legacy—without iconoclasm witnessed in the Balkans or in Poland—the planning of the Finnish metropolis predated the foundation of the independent state. There were remarkable attempts at public–private partnership, but on the whole the process was driven by the idea of creating a Finnish metropolis. The expectations were high: newly erected government buildings were to be at once representative, modern, and national. From the 1920s on, Nordic classicism became one of the widely admired representations of modern urbanity.³²

Much less known are the examples of the Lithuanian interwar capital Kaunas and the other Baltic cities Steven A. Mansbach explores. The author shows how artists were assigned the task not only of representing the new states, but also of proving their democratic and cultural viability. Lithuania serves as a particularly interesting example because it embodied all the problems of the region: with Kaunas as ersatz capital (instead of Vilnius, which became part of the Second Polish Republic), it was difficult for Lithuania to aspire to national representation of power. Kaunas possessed almost none of the features necessary to fill such a role. The choice for modernism was, of course, also due to the restrictions imposed by the economic situation. It gave the provincial town of Kaunas a whiff of internationality. Mansbach points to professional journals as the most important driving belt for the

³¹ Guillén, *The Taylorized Beauty*.

³² Connah, *Finland*.

transfer of the modern style to the Baltic countries. In this sense “eastmodern” illustrates the high degree of reflected modernization in the cities under scrutiny here.³³

Finally, Eve Blau sheds light on the many transformations that shaped the modern experience in Zagreb, present-day capital of Croatia. She shows how the whole notion of modern planning was rendered absurd by conflicting authorities. This process led to complete disintegration and modernization from below that rested more on local initiative than on central authority. The modernity of Zagreb’s development was due to its long experience of operating within transnational geopolitical structures and transterritorial urban networks. Rather than building on institutional structures, modern Zagreb was built on informal networks. Still, its architectural designs and plans are part and parcel of European modernism. It could even be argued that the deliberate sparing of central space in the inner city for later grandiose schemes can be seen as a powerful expression of the region’s belief in urban modernization. Zagreb might have been one of the also-rans for the time being, but this was not to remain so.³⁴

Some Conclusions

The contributions to this volume confirm many of the editors’ assumptions about the modern experience in Eastern Europe: the demanding social and ethnic tensions, the strong role of the state, the search for radical planning solutions, and the ties to the international modernist movement during the interwar years are reflected in the empirical research presented here. In this respect, the emergence of the Eastern European metropolis is indeed a process *sui generis*. The ambivalence of the modern experience is another theme that can be traced throughout the volume: optimism and hubris, planning and chaos, social progress and violent setbacks were

³³ For what might be seen as a striking continuity into the socialist period, see Hurnaus et al., *Eastmodern*.

³⁴ For competition between cities in the region, see Kozińska-Witt, *Krakau*; and Moravánszky, *Competing Visions*.

closely connected. Overall, the settings changed so rapidly that none of the political actors could claim to be in control. Rather, they were propelled forward in a multitude of urban races to modernity.

In many of the countries studied here, the process of urbanization continued after 1945. Cities like Sofia, Belgrade, or Moscow continued to grow at a breathtaking pace. Yet it seems that even in the socialist countries the age of great planning and modernist optimism ended.³⁵ More often the observers of urban life would perceive the ambivalences that Mark D. Steinberg found in fin-de-siècle St. Petersburg. Some of the most pressing social problems that had marred urban life at the outset of classical modernity were resolved. The race to modernity had produced results, albeit often at a high price and in a different way than initially imagined. The great authoritarian visions of the twentieth century have turned from an object of awe and admiration to an object of study. The postmodern era is certainly more skeptical of the grand designs that once fascinated our great-grandfathers.³⁶ Still, reflective modernization, the obsession with models—of course never fully implemented—and comparisons, the attempt to find one's future in other geographical settings is a lesson the Eastern European metropolis can teach, and it is as relevant as ever.

By concentrating on capital cities, some aspects of urban modernity in Eastern Europe—for example, the phenomenon of the new city, from Gdynia in Poland to Magnitogorsk in Soviet Russia—could not be addressed in this volume.³⁷ Moreover, by focusing on aspects of modernization the continuities of peasant life, which to this day are part of Eastern European metropolitan life, are only touched upon.³⁸ The changes brought by modernity are more strongly emphasized than the continuities, especially the ability of

³⁵ Lebow, *Unfinished Utopia*; Bohn, *Von der "europäischen Stadt."*

³⁶ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*; Böhme, "'Stadtutopien' und 'Stadtwirklichkeit,'" 68–91; Bruyn, *Die Diktatur der Philanthropen*.

³⁷ Kargon et al., *Invented Edens*; for the specific but no less remarkable example of Zlín, see Nerdinger, *Zlín*; Klingan et al., *A Utopia of Modernity*; and for the Soviet case of Magnitogorsk, see Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*.

³⁸ See, for example, Economakis, *From Peasant to Petersburger*; and Hoffmann, *Peasant Metropolis*.

Eastern European metropolitan cities to survive during times of crises. Many of the places studied in this volume had to make several “comebacks” after shattering urban catastrophes.³⁹ This is also an integral part of the modern legacy in Eastern Europe. Another legacy of the region that is still not well understood is the success story and continuity of planning.⁴⁰ Overshadowed by evident planning disasters of the postwar period, places like Warsaw remain focal points of integral planning reaching far beyond the city and urban infrastructure. These efforts were not yet labeled socialist, although the continuity in personnel is striking.

In the twenty-first century, the race to modernity is taking place farther east. Few places in Eastern Europe are still trying to reinvent themselves. Moscow might be one of the examples where grand designs are still part of urban development. Most of the other metropolitan areas studied here seem saturated or have taken a much more modest, market-driven path. Today the arenas of great plans, immense urban problems, and phenomenal growth rates have shifted to the authoritarian states of Asia. Both the Gulf States and China are part of this race to modernity. Many of their projects exhibit similarities to high modernity in Eastern Europe, often on an even grander scale. There again, Western experts are using the opportunity to implement their aesthetic and architectural visions. Once again regimes try to bolster their legitimacy by embracing urban modernity. Still, there are also important differences to Eastern Europe’s entry into modernity. The Western city—London, Paris, or even New York—is no longer the model. The Asian metropolis has become an urban entity *sui generis*, a place that can hardly be gauged by Western standards.

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³⁹ Hoffmann et al., “Introduction,” 308–13.

⁴⁰ Laak, “Planung,” 305–26.

cussions at both venues. These workshops were important steps in our own attempt to understand urban history, where Thomas Mergel (Berlin) and Dieter Schott (Darmstadt) gave important keynote speeches. We would like to thank them as well as Clemens Zimmermann (Saarbrücken) and Malte Rolf (Bamberg) for the stimulating questions they raised.

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2. Modernity as Mask: Reality, Appearance, and Knowledge on the Petersburg Street

Mark D. Steinberg

Where in the new does the boundary run
between reality and appearance?
—Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*

The social and symbolic significance of St. Petersburg as Russia's most deliberately modern city—with “Europe” often standing for the “modern”—inspired a body of often obsessive writing about the imperial capital. No other Russian city, and few other world cities, have produced such a flood of words about the spaces and symbolism of urban life. In Russian literature and culture, “Petersburg” became (and, in many respects still is) as much an idea as a place. More precisely, it is a place where stories and images about it have long posed critical questions of existential and philosophical meaning. Among these questions, “modernity” was always at the center. In the early 1800s, Alexander Herzen recognized that “to speak about Russia today means to speak about Petersburg, about this city ... that alone lives and acts on the level of the modern [*sovremennyi*].”¹ Of course, this *sovremennyi*, used so often in writings about St. Petersburg, was an ambiguous term, denoting both the present time (“contemporaneity,” in all of its complexities, contingencies, and particularities) and the distinctive temporality of modern times. But it is clear that it was the latter meaning—and thus the positioning of St. Petersburg in a global and comparative temporality—that Herzen had in mind, as

¹ Aleksandr I. Gertsen, “Moskva i Peterburg” (1842), in *Izbrannye sochineniia* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1937), 262–63.

did most other commentators on the *sovremennost'* (modernity) of the capital. The myth-making literary canon about the city, the "Petersburg Text," is well known.² But concern with the meanings of St. Petersburg as a modern metropolis, especially in the years of uncertainty and looming crisis between the 1905 and 1917 revolutions, reached far beyond this literary world and offered interpretations more deeply grounded in everyday conditions of social life. These concerns were especially ubiquitous in the world of urban journalism, which is the focus of this chapter.

"Masquerade" was a leitmotif in this journalistic interpretation of St. Petersburg. Early twentieth-century urban journalists viewed the imperial capital as not the respectable European metropolis it pretended to be but a façade, a performance of Westernization, a mask signifying Europe and civilization. And this was not merely a story about St. Petersburg. It lent itself easily to a larger argument: that modernity itself was deception and illusion. A great many Russian observers of modern life had come to share the worries of earlier Western European intellectuals that the happy promises of modern "progress" were an illusion. And their perceptions foreshadowed even more critical diagnoses to come. Russian writers about the city, I suggest, would have well understood what Walter Benjamin later had in mind when he defined modernity as "the world dominated by its phantasmagorias" and of the modern metropolis as a dark spectacle of deception and self-deception, of simulacra, illusions, and masks.³ This Russian discourse was part of a transnational response to modernity (though often more in parallel than through direct influence). But there was a Petersburg difference: these perceptions and judgments were shared by an unusually broad sweep of urban society, marked with greater emotional and interpretive intensity, and shaded with greater darkness. Here on the eastern margin of modern Europe, where modernization was experienced later and more suddenly, and in a cultural context rich in

² See, especially, Toporov, *Peterburgskii tekst*; Buckler, *Mapping St. Petersburg*.

³ This theme pervades Benjamin's work, notably Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*. The quotation is from the conclusion of his 1939 "Exposé," *ibid.*, 26. See discussions in Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, esp. chapters 4 and 8 (e.g., pages 81, 92) and Gilloch, *Myth and Metropolis*, e.g., 149.

philosophical skepticism, observers of city life were well positioned to see and understand acutely the dark sides of modernization and capitalism—and the deceptive masks that tried to hide this face. Modern Western metropolises like New York, London, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna, but also modernizing central European cities like Warsaw, Cracow, Budapest, and Belgrade (even Odessa), were typically viewed as places of intertwined dread and delight; but these perceptions and emotions leaned persistently toward an optimistic embrace of the modern.⁴ Urban writers in fin-de-siècle St. Petersburg dwelled on the dread. One can argue, from outcomes, that this greater disenchantment also had greater consequence. As faith in the steady march of modern progress was undermined, faith in revolution could become more compelling. That the modernizing revolution that came with 1917 would bring new suffering and new reason to doubt the happy promises of modernization is another story.⁵

This interpretation of the city and modernity is viewed through the interpreting eyes of St. Petersburg's "urban writers," a term I use to emphasize both their object and their location: they wrote *about* and *in* the public spaces of the city, as commentators on urban public life writing in the urban public space of newspapers, magazines, and journals. Urban writers were not simply mirrors of popular perception, of course—though they sometimes pleaded innocent objectivity when accused of exaggerating reality. These writers were a type of elite: literate, concerned, and outspoken, believing in their capacities to inform, instruct, and influence others. Their voices both reflected and helped to shape public thought and opinion. To be sure, they also wanted to win readers and sell papers. So, like city journalists elsewhere, they trafficked in spectacle, and sometimes blurred spectacle and reality.⁶ But even when entertaining, even when elaborating and fabricating facts to give readers a good story, they voiced a vision of

⁴ The terminology is from Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*. See also, for example, Schlör, *Nachts in der großen Stadt*; Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900*; Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities*; Sylvester, *Tales of Old Odessa*; Wood, *Becoming Metropolitan*.

⁵ Though the worst brutalities of modernization were still to come in the 1920s, see "Revolutionary Modernity and its Discontents" in Steinberg, *Proletarian Imagination*, 184–223.

⁶ See Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities*.

the city. Their views were informed by various sources and points of view: some were politically and culturally conservative, others liberal and even radical in their desire for continued change. Yet it is remarkable how consistently they looked at the problems of modern city life, how many anxieties they shared. Theirs was overwhelmingly a dark vision of the city and modernity. They emphasized the modern city as a place of disarray: moral transgression and disorder, excess and extravagance, illusoriness and deception, and moods of disorientation, uncertainty, and incomprehension, if not outright despair, all the results of the characteristic “modern conditions” of fragmentation (*razlozhenie*), groundlessness, arbitrariness, loss of coherent meaning, and moral and physical degeneration.⁷ Side by side with regular reports on scientific innovation, technical achievement, entertainments, and the mental stimulation of metropolitan life, the overwhelming sense and argument in the contemporary press was that St. Petersburg suffered from precisely this modernity—in other words, from the fact that “the general conditions of Petersburg life are both economically and culturally increasingly approaching the conditions of life of Western European urban centers.”⁸ That this “approach” was a cause for anxiety more than satisfaction, pessimism more than hope, says a great deal about the Russian modern experience but also about a Russian perspective on global modernity.⁹ Petersburg’s journalists, whether liberals or conservatives, were inclined to view the city’s urban pathologies as explicable not by Russian underdevelopment or the particularities of this city, but as evidence of a sickness that spoke about modern civilization itself, and perhaps the human condition.

Petersburg’s urban writers understood that it was the capital city’s “modernity” that lured migrants in such large numbers. St. Petersburg was a magnet, no one doubted. But its attractive power was viewed in uncertain light. Some viewed this positively: the city as “lighthouse” reaching into the darkness of the countryside and pro-

⁷ For more evidence and discussion, see Steinberg, *Petersburg Fin de Siècle*.

⁸ B. Iagodin, “Samoubiistvo i bor’ba s nim,” *Zhizn’ dlia vsekh*, 1912, no. 12 (December): 1881.

⁹ Compare the quite different responses in the daily press, at roughly the same time, found by Peter Fritzsche in Berlin and Nathaniel Wood in Cracow: Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin*; Wood, *Becoming Metropolitan*.

vincial towns. But more common were images of the city as irresistible seducer and deceiver.¹⁰ “The complex and vital life of the capital,” a columnist for the mass-circulation boulevard paper *Gazeta-kopeika* typically concluded, “is terrible—terrible and attractive [*pritiagatel’naia*].”¹¹ Such ambivalence was typical. And this was often elaborated into an interpretation of the ambiguities of modern civilization itself. Hence, talk of the “paradoxes of modernity”¹² or the “fatal contradictions of modernity” (*smertonosnye protivorechiia sovremennosti*).¹³ Of course, this vision was not unique to Russia. The view of modernity as contradictory and ambiguous—an unstable mixture of opportunity and peril, vitality and decadence, power and helplessness—was a cliché in Western thinking about the city. The metropolis was long seen in Western culture as a contradictory expression of human achievement (or hubris) and human inadequacy, and in the age of Enlightenment and capitalism the city acquired only deeper layers of contradiction. This was the argument, most famously, of Charles Baudelaire, in writings that helped to establish and define the category *la modernité* for thinking about the city. On the one hand, there was strange blending of the “fugitive, fleeting beauty of everyday life,” the “rapture,” “joy,” and “intoxication” that can be experienced amid the urban crowd, even the transcendent “eternity” that the “heroic” connoisseur of the modern city can find in what is most ephemeral, fugitive, and artificial. On the other hand, there was the “darkness,” “despair,” and “perpetual mourning” of the city dweller, the oppressive awareness of the “sad and tragic heart of the modern city.”¹⁴ The continual repetition, to the point of cliché, of

¹⁰ For example, Ol’ga Gridina, “Gorod-obmanshchik,” *Gazeta-kopeika*, 24 December 1913, 3; Ol’ga Gridina, “Rokovaia oshibka,” *Gazeta-kopeika*, 13 March 1910, 3.

¹¹ Mikh. Dubrovskii, “V bor’be za sushchestvovanie,” *Gazeta-kopeika*, 26 September 1911, 3.

¹² P. Cher-skii, “Paradoksy sovremennosti,” *Novyi zhurnal dlia vsekh*, 1914, no. 4 (April): 51–53.

¹³ M. S.-in, “Nravstvennost’ i dolgoletie,” *Vsemirnaia panorama*, no. 31 (20 November 1909): 10.

¹⁴ See Charles Baudelaire, *Les fleurs du mal* (1857), *Le spleen de Paris* (1862), and *Le peintre de la vie moderne* (1863), and discussion in Berman, *All That Is Solid*, part III (“Baudelaire: Modernism in the Streets”).

this contradictory vision of the modern city in both the west and in Russia, reminds us how compelling this perception has been for seeking and seeing coherent meaning in the flux of urban life. Where Russian observers differed was in viewing this “sad and tragic heart” as the greater truth, as overshadowing the heroic intoxication of being modern.

Among the physical spaces of the city, the street has attracted the most sustained and anxious attention. The street is both the most urban space and the one most entwined with the city’s public sphere. It also tends to be the most laden with interpretation and signification. Modern European and American writers and artists have often been drawn to the street and have seen there the embodiment of the modern experience. This literary street is a space of restless movement, confusion, fragmentariness, fleeting glimpses and encounters, memories, fantasies, pleasure, display, artifice, loneliness, boredom, dirt, smells, menace, brutality, moral fall, death, and madness. And these images are rich in larger meanings: possibility, adventure, freedom, incoherence, alienation, loss, evil, tragedy, and intimations of catastrophe. That there is little coherence uniting these jumbled images and meanings is itself part of the implied argument.¹⁵ A strong sense of the street’s unstable power was captured by Benjamin’s influential project in the 1920s and 1930s to collect, arrange, and comment on a vast archive of text fragments about the modern city, which he saw embodied in nineteenth-century Paris. The street here is filled with ambivalence and intertwined oppositions. The street, wrote Benjamin quoting Baudelaire, is a site of fantastic beauty, of “majestic accumulations of stone,” but also a hellishly “dark tableau” of foulness and brutality “such as dark Ezekiel might have dreamt.”¹⁶ The street, Benjamin showed, is a potent space for gazing, seeing, and display—the importance of vision in modern life being central to his approach—but a contradictory and unstable sight: a space for imagination, creativity, and self-realization, but also a space of alienation, falseness, and failure. It is a “labyrinth,” where the hidden path toward

¹⁵ Among many studies of the city and street in literature and art, see especially Alter, *Imagined Cities*; and Pike, *The Image of the City*.

¹⁶ Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 238, 446.

enlightenment leads also toward malevolence,¹⁷ a space of “stifled perspective,”¹⁸ an epistemologically troubling terrain where truth can be glimpsed and overheard but never fully grasped.¹⁹

Russian urban writers certainly recognized that the modern street can be a vital spectacle—a flickering “cinematograph” is the metaphor they often used.²⁰ Some found pleasure, possibility, and progress there. But darker interpretations predominated. Russian urban writing about the modern street emphasized estrangement and moral disgust, degeneration and danger, and, especially, falseness and incoherence.²¹ In particular, illegibility, uncertainty, and the unknown were leitmotifs in urban journalism, especially in the new and unstable conditions in Russia after 1905. Newspaper readers were daily treated to stories about the public life of the capital city that eluded legibility: inexplicable crimes, unidentified bodies, puzzling murders and suicides, and other evidence that the city was shrouded in epistemological and moral shadows. Indeed, through the lens and language of the press, St. Petersburg appeared (in their words) full of secrets and mystery (*tainstvennost'*), strangers and the unknown (*neznakomtsy*, *neizvestnye*, *neizvestnost'*), appearance (*vid*) and deception (*obman*), uncertainty and lack of clarity (*neiasnost'*), murkiness (*mut'*), shadowiness (*prizrachnost'*), illusoriness (*mnimost'* and *illiuziia*), and masquerade (*maskarad*). At times, it all seemed to border on “chaos,” both civic and epistemological. It was, in more theoretical terms, a phantasmagoria—a spectacle of illusions and masks—filled with the seemingness of appearance.

No wonder, then, that masks and masquerade seemed to haunt the Russian capital in the early twentieth century. Judging by its newspapers and magazines, the city teemed with masks. Many were literal and visible: masks worn by criminals, the black mask covering the head and face of the mysterious wrestler at the Cinizelli Circus who captivated the public in 1909, alluring black masks and veils obscuring the faces of women at society masquerade balls, and

¹⁷ Ibid., 429, 519, 901.

¹⁸ Ibid., 103.

¹⁹ Ibid., 431.

²⁰ For example, “Kinematograf: v tramvae,” *Gazeta-kopeika*, 9 October 1909, 3; Skitalets, “Sinematograf,” *Gazeta-kopeika*, 25 October 1909, 4.

²¹ See Steinberg, *Petersburg Fin de Siècle*, chap. 2 (“Streets”).

masks on stage and in literature. More troubling, though, urban space was said to swarm with metaphoric masks: impersonation, imposture, illusion, and falsification. It seemed at times that “masks” veiled the faces of all modern men and women, that city people were unknown and potentially dangerous strangers, even that the city itself hid its true nature. With all their visceral and symbolic potency, masks fascinated and troubled urban writers, and presumably their readers. Stories of urban masquerade were told, in part, as diverting curiosities of modern city life. No less, these stories were signs of a troubling philosophical and political problem: How to know, interpret, and control the urban public landscape and, by extension, modern civilization?

The mask is a protean and unstable image. Masks speak of the self (hidden, performed, uncertain), of sexual allure, of death, of boundaries and thresholds, of disguise, and of the unknown. All of these themes make their appearance in this chapter. But my focus—for this was the preoccupation of the daily press—is on the epistemological symbolism and significance of masks: the stubborn and unruly resistance of modern life to the no less modern desire to make the world ordered and legible. The very creation of St. Petersburg in the eighteenth century, of course, was a principal Russian symbol of this elusive modern dream of a knowable and ordered society. Amid the disorder of the modern city, masks became powerful symbols of the ubiquity of deception and illusion, and behind this the even deeper “abyss” of uncertainty and the unknown.

Theorists of masks and masquerade have emphasized precisely this subversion of the ordering conceit of modernity. Masquerade, writes Efrat Tseëlon, “unsettles and disrupts the fantasy” of coherence, “replaces clarity with ambiguity,” and undermines the “phantasmic constructions of containment and closure” that characterize the modern project. This can be positive and exhilarating, of course. Masks can give us, psychologically, feelings of power and possibility. When we disguise ourselves, at least in theory, we feel that a field of play and possibility has opened where our identities become more protean.²²

²² Tseëlon, *Masquerade and Identities*, 3; Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization*.

For modernists, Russians included, this experience was indeed inspiring and liberating. Like Baudelaire, modernist writers and artists took pleasure in the vitality of the urban crowd and felt a deeply intoxicating “craving for disguises and masks.”²³ Recent studies of the attraction to images of masquerade and illusion by Russian writers like Andrei Belyi and Aleksandr Blok have noted their excitement in entering this unstable world where the self could defy rules and expectations, where a new truth could emerge in the flux of uncertainty and contradiction, where embracing illusion could allow creative individuals to break out of the iron cage of ordinary reality and enter into a terrain that was more fertile and productive.²⁴

For the modern urbanites of St. Petersburg, however, especially journalistic interpreters of the public everyday, the unsettling ubiquity of masquerade, especially forms of public life viewed as metaphorically “masked,” was mainly dark and threatening. Darkness and chaos lay hidden beneath the appearance of order and progress. Presumed knowledge and control of the elemental, the conceit of all cities and the essence of the idea of St. Petersburg, turned out to be only a mask of superficial legibility and power. To be sure, the endless repetition of newspaper stories of disguise and the mysterious was partly an effort to unmask the unknown, to shed light into the darkness. And the darkness in these tales was mitigated also by the thrill many readers likely found in reading sensationalist news reports about disguise, even predatory and criminal disguise. Still, these unceasing stories could not but remind readers of the ubiquity of deception and the unknown in the modern metropolis and the vanity of demanding full knowledge and control of modern life.

Confidence Games

The city of strangers was made stranger still, and more dangerous, by also being a city of masks. External markings such as dress and bearing, urban observers continually complained, had ceased to be reliable markers of identity. In particular, the symbolic code in

²³ Baudelaire, *The Parisian Prowler*, 21 (“Crowds”).

²⁴ Seifrid, “‘Illusion’ and Its Workings,” esp. 213–14; Soboleva, *The Silver Mask*.

which “proper and respectable” (*prilichnyi*) dress signified social and moral respectability had disintegrated. Every day, the press reported stories of “respectably dressed” (*prilichno odetye*)—even elegantly dressed—men and women who turned out to be dangerous thieves, burglars, con artists, or predators. The adjective *prilichnyi* punctuates these accounts, for its moral meanings of propriety, orderliness, and worthiness were precisely what had become so illusive in city life. “The most terrible thing,” the commentator calling himself “The Wanderer” (*Skitalets*) wrote in *Gazeta-kopeika* in 1910, “is that there is no guide to help you, so that from a person’s outer appearance you can’t really say with any certainty who is before you” socially or morally.²⁵ Vision could no longer be trusted. Surface appearance was too often a deceitful mask.

Numerous writers voiced their distress at discovering that “correct” appearance could “conceal distasteful moral murk [*nравственнаia mut’*],” that refined elegance could “mask immoral purposes.”²⁶ It was repeatedly observed that “dark personalities” (*temnye lichnosti*) raised “no suspicions” in the eyes of their victims because their dress and manners seemed to say that they posed no danger.²⁷ However naive it may seem to us, early twentieth-century Russian commentators saw visual and moral dissonance when decent dress did not signify real decency and saw in this a troubling symbol of the nature of the modern city and modern forms of public display. Again and again urban writers declared their dismay that one simply could not tell who was honest and who was evil just by “looking at them.”²⁸ The same applied to the physical and social landscape of the city itself. What appeared to be an honest tearoom or a civic club might in fact—once you “raised the curtain”—turn out to be an “abyss” (*bezdna*) of crime, debauchery, or prostitution.²⁹

²⁵ Skitalets, “Mopsik i Piliulia,” *Gazeta-kopeika*, 14 June 1910, 3.

²⁶ Graf Amori [I.P. Rappgof], *Kavalery Shneider: Roman-byt’ iz obshchestvennoi zhizni Petrograda* (St. Petersburg [1915]), 3.

²⁷ *Novye peterburgskie trushchoby: ocherki stolichnoi zhizni* (St. Petersburg [1909–10]), vyp. 1, 1–11.

²⁸ “Del’tsy temnogo Peterburga,” *Peterburgskii listok*, 20 August 1910, 4.

²⁹ I.V. Lebedev (Diadia Vania), “Birzhi zhenskoi zhizni,” *Malen’kaia gazeta*, 3 November 1914, 2; Klubmen, “Klubnaia vakkhanaliia,” *Peterburgskii listok*, 25 July 1910, 3; *Novye peterburgskie trushchoby*, vyp. 1, 17–22.

City dwellers were regularly victimized by confidence games and other swindles (*afery* and *moshennichestva*) perpetrated by con artists who were usually, reporters warned, “respectably dressed.” Such masquerade, this phrase reminded readers, thrived in the visual landscape of the city, with its ubiquitous strangers and performative possibilities. A leitmotif in these reports was that a carefully cultivated display of honesty was a mask to ensure that “no one suspected.” The variety of such swindlers was great: thieves, burglars, pickpockets, shoplifters, beggars, bait-and-switch artists, and pretenders (*samozvantsy*) of all sorts variously took advantage of persistent belief in established signs of visual display in order to convincingly masquerade as people who could be trusted.

Street thieves, for example, made use of the presumed semiotics of dress to epistemologically disarm their victims. Such performances very often targeted newcomers to the city—they were assumed to be the most likely to trust in the old rules of appearance. When two young women from Vitebsk province, for example, arrived at the train station in St. Petersburg with the purpose of looking for work, they were stopped by a “respectably dressed gentleman and lady” who offered them domestic work, promising good conditions. Taking separate cabs—with one “unknown” (as the paper called them using a common term in such writing) riding with each of the girls—and traveling for a long time along various “streets and alleys,” they finally stopped in some “dark alley” by the gate of a “gloomy house.” As soon as the girls stepped out of the carriages, however, the cab drivers whipped up their horses and sped away with the lady and gentlemen as well as the newcomers’ belongings, including the money with which they had planned to start their new lives in the city.³⁰

Shoplifters, too, were almost invariably “well dressed,” in order to pretend to be customers.³¹ No one suspected, for example, a “respectably dressed lady” (*prilichno odetaia dama*) who entered a clothing shop, chose her purchases, and then asked the shop boy to accompany her to her furnished apartment for payment. While the boy waited outside, she fled through the back staircase. She had rented the room that morning, promising the landlord to return later

³⁰ *Peterburgskii listok*, 16 January 1910, 4.

³¹ For example, *Peterburgskii listok*, 18 March 1909, 4.

with her belongings and the rent.³² The press regularly reported such “sham” or “imaginary” shoppers (*mnimye pokupateli*).³³

Begging could also involve a masquerade of respectability. Most often masquerade in begging involved the pretense of poverty or physical handicap—a performance enhanced variously with rags, bandages, and crutches.³⁴ At the same time, there existed a special type of beggar whose pity-evoking performance required more respectable dress. According to one account, “in most cases, he is quite well dressed, has gracious manners, and with his respectable appearance deludes the trusting public.” He might locate himself by a food store, for example, where he “politely” appeals for help for his “hungry family,” or by a pharmacy, where he speaks of a wife who needs medicine, or by a bakery where he tells of children without bread.³⁵

Some of these confidence games were relatively simple and classic. A bait-and-switch *afëra* reported in 1909 was typical. A boy working for a shopkeeper in the Apraksin market was sent to a bank to deposit more than 100 rubles. On the way, he was stopped on the street by young men who noticed his bundle wrapped in newspaper, as was the custom. “God has granted us happiness,” the strangers declared, and said they want to share their good fortune. They showed him a wrapped bundle that was allegedly filled with money and asked about his package, which the boy showed them, saying it was not his own money. They handed it back to the boy and left him. On later opening his bundle the boy was horrified to discover that his package had been switched for one filled with newspaper and a few copper coins.³⁶ The papers were full of similar stories of switched packages or dropped wallets (as prelude to a switch)—all performed, of course, by “respectably dressed” men and women.³⁷

³² *Peterburgskii listok*, 2 January 1905, 4.

³³ *Peterburgskii listok*, 1 May 1909, 4.

³⁴ For example, “Nishchie-bogachi,” *Gazeta-kopeika*, 26 March 1909, 2; “Nishchii simulant,” *Peterburgskii listok*, 29 January 1913, 4; *Peterburgskii listok*, 25 November 1908, 5; *Nishchenstvo i bor'ba s nim* (St. Petersburg, 1913), 58–59, 73, 75.

³⁵ N.V. Nikitin, *Peterburg noch 'iu* (St. Petersburg, 1903), 191–92.

³⁶ *Peterburgskii listok*, 6 March 1909, 4.

³⁷ For example, *Gazeta-kopeika*, 11 June 1911, 3; *Peterburgskii listok*, 16 May 1913, 15.

Even the police, who were responsible for knowing and controlling urban public life, were sometimes targeted in confidence games, as in the many reported cases of “simulated theft” (*simuliatzii grabezha*). For example, a worker named Aleksei Ivanov appeared at a police station at 3 a.m., his clothes torn with knife cuts and his hand bleeding, reporting that he had been walking near 74 Obvodnyi Canal Street with a package of 79 rubles he was delivering for his employer (a candy distributor) when two “unknown men” demanded that he hand over his money, threatening him with knives. He refused and fought back, the worker testified, but lost the battle and the money was now gone.³⁸ Of course, this performance depended on the fact that such street robberies actually did often occur: again, the illusion was constructed of reality itself.

Not only theft but violence and death could approach in mask. In the summer of 1908, for example, a young man introduced himself in church to an elderly and pious former teacher and told her that he had been unemployed for months, had no money, but wished to study. Trusting, she invited him to her home, fed him, and offered him free lessons. On arriving the next day, he crushed her head with a heavy cobblestone and stole her money.³⁹ Suicide also could be a masquerade—performances echoing real stories reported daily in the press but seeking to deceive to win sympathy and help.⁴⁰

Identity Performances

The dangerous uncertainties of knowledge in the city were especially evident in the many criminal performances of identity. Making ill-intentioned use of the epistemological strangeness of the city, its plenitude of strangers and the unknown, and its multitude of possible situations, stories, and opportunities, numerous men and women muddled city life still further with simulated identities and stories. In the language of the press, the identities of these men and

³⁸ *Peterburgskii listok*, 13 April 1909, 4.

³⁹ *Gazeta-kopeika*, 13 July 1908, 2.

⁴⁰ *Gazeta-kopeika*, 24 August 1908, 2–3; *Peterburgskii listok*, 18 September 1910, 3; *Malen'kaia gazeta*, 14 August 1915, 3.

women were not real but *mnimye*—imaginary, seeming, pretend. They were not their actual selves, but *samozvantsy*—pretenders, frauds, imposters, literally those who name themselves. Newspapers were filled with stories of people performing the identities of architects, publishers, journalists, lawyers, doctors, priests, actors, businessmen, military officers, government officials (including inspector generals [*revizory*]), noblemen, police detectives, postmen, delivery boys, renters, solicitors of charity, servants, matchmakers, plumbers, electricians, and repair men. The purpose of these performances was mainly to extort money from the gullible or to enter homes for the purpose of robbery. These displays of performed identity were so ubiquitous in the years after 1905 that one journalist described the problem as a new “mass epidemic.”⁴¹

Relatively simple and common, though quite varied, were masquerades that enabled entry to the apartments of the wealthy. *Peterburgskii listok*, in 1913, noted the appearance of a gang of commen-pretenders (*moshenniki-samozvantsy*)—described ambivalently as both “very dangerous” and as impressively “cunning” (*khitroumnye*)—who appear at the doors of elegant apartments in the guise of plumbers and report a leak to the floor below. Admitted to look at the boiler, they advise the owner that it is defective but they will return tomorrow to replace it, which they do, taking with them the old boiler as well as many valuables.⁴² The pretense of taking a job as a servant with the goal of robbery was especially common.⁴³ Other masquerades used for gaining entry for purposes of robbery included friendly visitors arriving when only servants are at home (their proper, even lordly, outer appearance arouses no suspicion and they are let in supposedly to leave the master or mistress a note),⁴⁴ men pretending to court young women in order to steal from their parents,⁴⁵ prospective “renters” looking over a furnished room in an apartment (managing to lift various items while

⁴¹ *Peterburgskii listok*, 24 March 1910, 4.

⁴² *Peterburgskii listok*, 7 February 1913, 13.

⁴³ For example, *Peterburgskii listok*, 8 January 1910, 4.

⁴⁴ *Peterburgskii listok*, February 1910, 4. See also *Peterburgskii listok*, 21 June 1908, 3; and Aborigen, *Krovavye letopisi Peterburga*, 13.

⁴⁵ *Gazeta-kopeika*, 30 October 1908, 3.

looking around),⁴⁶ even “monks” distributing religious tracts.⁴⁷ There seemed to be no end to the variety of such impersonations; but whatever the particular narrative, these *aferisty* and their performed identities all shared the ability to make profitable use of the epistemological uncertainties of the modern city and then, before being apprehended, disappear, as one reporter put it, “into the blue fog” of the metropolis.⁴⁸

Street masquerade gave its perpetrators power to evoke pity for sham beggars, as well as the power of access and persuasion for many types of conmen and thieves. Appropriately, very many of those who made use of borrowed identities chosen from among identities imbued with actual social power: representatives of the established power elite, such as government officials or aristocrats, but mostly businessmen and professionals. Of course, most of these were male identities. And these frauds were played out in the public sphere—indeed, it was the increasing flux and multiplicity of public life that gave these *aferisty* their countless narratives, places to perform them, and ways to disappear.

Establishing fictive businesses in order to extort money from gullible investors was a commonly reported method of operation.⁴⁹ Publishing, especially following the easing of censorship after 1905, was one of the most important sites of Russia’s developing public life, full of new opportunities as well as of political significance for the country’s modernization. Appropriately, fictive publishing ventures were a popular scam. One “*aferist*-publisher” was well masked: his “outer appearance,” long hair, and dark glasses made him look like a “literary type” (*literator*). He rented a furnished office where he met with investors who each gave him between 75 and 300 rubles to start up a new book publishing house.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ *Malen'kaia gazeta*, 1 August 1915, 4.

⁴⁷ *Gazeta-kopeika*, 30 March 1911, 3.

⁴⁸ *Malen'kaia gazeta*, 1 August 1915, 4.

⁴⁹ For example, *Gazeta-kopeika*, 11 April 1912, 1, 3–4; “Brachnye aferisty v Peterburge,” *Peterburgskii listok*, 30 January 1913, 3; *Peterburgskii listok*, 26 January 1910, 5; *Malen'kaia gazeta*, 2 July 1915, 3.

⁵⁰ *Peterburgskii listok*, 8 January 1910, 4. See also *Peterburgskii listok*, 7 June 1913, 4.

The trope of the hidden Jew was an occasional, but telling, sub-theme in these stories of masked public selves. Whenever a criminal was ethnically Jewish, special note of this fact was made in the newspaper reports, implicitly suggesting an aggravating aspect to their deception.⁵¹ The conventional and widely accepted anti-Semitic stereotypes of Jewish cosmopolitanism, rootlessness, greed, and dishonesty all seemed to be confirmed by such stories, adding to their potency as signs of the dangers in an increasingly open and fluid public life.

Money seemed to be the motive for most of these masquerades. But not always. In 1909, *Peterburgskii listok* reported the case of a “music teacher” who dressed in a pedagogical uniform, called himself “titular councilor” and “department head,” and claimed to direct a “St. Petersburg Department for Aid in the Provision of Musical Education to the Underprivileged.” This institute had no teachers or music but “hired” (though failed to pay) poor young women to work as clerks, whom the “teacher” would relate to “far from correctly.”⁵² Here, the evident pleasure of creating for oneself a new and prestigious identity, mixed with predatory sexuality, seems to have been enough of a reason. The press featured other cases in which masquerade seemed to be for its own sake.⁵³ The pleasure of transgressive play with alternative identities, and the enjoyment of the power over others that such identity performances gave, remind us of what may well have been present in all masquerades.

Nighttime

Nighttime, illuminated only by artificial light, was a world of the “mirage.”⁵⁴ Urban writers viewed the alluring, flickering, and false phantasmagoria of the city at night as the city’s darkest mask. This was a distinctive temporal landscape. At night, the identities and rules of the day were especially unstable, allowing for greater ad-

⁵¹ For example, *Peterburgskii listok*, 13 March 1909, 8.

⁵² *Peterburgskii listok*, 12 April 1909, 7.

⁵³ For example, *Peterburgskii listok*, 15 June 1910, 4.

⁵⁴ Graf Amori [I.P. Rapgof], *Tainy Nevskogo prospekta* (Petrograd, 1915), 3–4.

venture and experimentation, but also greater danger. At night it was more difficult to see the “dark, slippery path” or to recognize that harm lay behind “mysterious smiles” and other temptations. Instead of the constant and relatively reasoned movement on the streets by day, the streets at night became a space filled with shadows and the unknown. This was a time that “conceals in itself every sort of secret.” Particularly ominous was Nevskii Prospect, where darkness hid many “mysterious professions” and “secret refuges.”⁵⁵ In the “half dark” of the electrically lit night, Nevskii seemed to swarm with “pale masks of hungry beasts” and “blackened masks of vice and crime.”⁵⁶

The night was especially associated with the sexual dangers that lurked behind masks in the city. Men and women who preyed on young girls on the streets of the city did not look dangerous with their nice clothes and friendly faces.⁵⁷ The most common danger, the press reported, were masquerades performed to lure innocent girls and young women into prostitution. A typical operation took out advertisements in the papers offering girls work as apprentices in shops: but these shops were really only “screens” (*shirmy*) for “dens” located upstairs, where girls were used to run errands, forced to get drunk, undressed, and made to dance for the guests.⁵⁸ Characteristic in these stories of young women lured into jobs that proved to be fronts for prostitution was the role of newspaper advertisements—an important feature of the city landscape. The journal associated with the St. Petersburg City Duma noted the likelihood that a response to a girl’s advertisement seeking work will lead to her “fall.” Honest people rarely answer such ads, it was said, but sexual predators do, for they know the desperation of young women alone in the city and know that their disguises will not be noticed by these innocents until it is too late.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Nikitin, *Peterburg noch'iu*, 3, 7, 41, 50. See also *Novye peterburgskie trushchoby*, vyp. 2, 27.

⁵⁶ Iv. Lukash, “Nevskii prospekt,” *Sovremennoe slovo*, 4/17 April 1918, 2.

⁵⁷ Maria Volgina, “Okhota na detei,” *Gazeta-kopeika*, 14 August 1913, 3.

⁵⁸ “Torgovlia ‘zhivym tovarom’ v Peterburge,” *Peterburgskii listok*, 3 March 1910, 4. See also *Gazeta-kopeika*, 6 July 1908, 2–3; *Peterburgskii listok*, 9 May 1910, 5; *Peterburgskii listok*, 15 February 1913, 3.

⁵⁹ *Gorodskoe delo*, 1910, no. 2 (15 January): 116–17.

Prostitutes were not always viewed as victims in these masquerades of illusion and deception. Behind their masks of service and submission—images linked to their profession but also to assumptions about gender—they could be quite predatory. Criminal slang had a special term for one such category, “*khipesnitsy*,” women who seduced men in order, with the help of male associates, to rob them while they slept.⁶⁰ In general, prostitutes were said to always wear masks, deluding men’s “naive eyes” with “painted faces,” smiling “bought lips,” false teeth, and alluring looks.⁶¹

A Masked Modern City

These particular stories of street masquerade were framed by a larger, and still more troubling, image of the city itself as masked. St. Petersburg was long viewed as a masked city, as a façade of Westernization behind which loomed disorder and backwardness. This perception only intensified amid the crises and uncertainties of the early twentieth century. This city looked the part of a European city, Dmitrii Merezhkovskii bitinglly wrote in the newspaper *Rech'* in 1908, in the way Smerdiakov, the illegitimate son in *The Brothers Karamazov*, looked, quoting Dostoevskii, “like a most respectable [*blagorodnyi*] foreigner.”⁶² A guidebook for visitors and residents similarly described the city as the most beautiful of European capitals but warned that this elegant display hid conditions—swampy soils, polluted waters, and a harmful climate—that over time made every resident physically sick. A writer for an urban-governance journal agreed that St. Petersburg had only the “likeness of a Western European” city, behind which its true backwardness was “hidden.”⁶³

⁶⁰ *Gazeta-kopeika*, 11 July 1908, 3; 22 July 1913; 25 July 1913, 3–4; *Peterburgskii listok*, 19 February 1914, 5.

⁶¹ Nikitin, *Peterburg noch'iu*, 55; *Peterburg noch'iu: Premiia zhurnala Shut*, 1911, no. 3; *Novye peterburgskie trushchoby*, vyp. 2, 25.

⁶² D. Merezhkovskii, “Peterburg byt' pustu,” *Rech'*, 21 December (3 January) 1908, 2.

⁶³ F. Belorus and N. Rozanov, *Tovarishch Peterburzhitsa* (St. Petersburg, 1910), 6; D. Protopopov, “Sud'ba russkikh gorodov,” *Gorodskoe delo*, 1911, no. 24 (15 December): 1712–13.

The mask that Petersburg wore, however, was as much a feature of its participation in a global modernity and urbanity as of its particular history. At the very least, it was said, all city dwellers “wear masks on their souls.”⁶⁴ Indeed, the whole city should be defined by a characteristic “urban deceit” (*gorodskoi obman*).⁶⁵ The street, in particular, was a site of continual masquerade: by day, a smiling but existentially bored crowd that could only “simulate happiness and satisfaction”; by night pervasive illusion and “self-deception.”⁶⁶ Others looked at the whole of contemporary modernity and saw masks: “the twentieth century is the age of the mask, the age of hidden experiences and the secret face.”⁶⁷ In “the times in which we live,” a journalist argued, contemporary life had become a protracted “gloomy masquerade of gay despair” (*mrachnyi maskarad veselogo otchaianiia*), a feverish “feast” of pleasure embraced in order to hide and forget our doubt and uncertainty.⁶⁸

The popular columnist Ol’ga Gridina elaborated on these themes by regularly warning her readers that the city is a cruel “deceiver” (*obmanshchik*). Young provincials, she acknowledged, come to the capital from their dark corners of “age-old silence” expecting to feel the “pulse of the age” amid the city’s rich and varied life. They come as if entering a “bright temple,” and not just for superficial pleasure but to partake of the city’s “inward richness.” The city answers these dreams with “gray skies, stone buildings, surrounding indifference, and the harsh and bitter struggle to survive—nothing else.” In time, the “brilliant” appearance of the city’s lively streets, theaters, and stores, with its electric lights shining like suns, is seen for the mask it really is. “Disillusionment” (*razocharovanie*), even to the point of suicide, is the inevitable result.⁶⁹ Like so many strangers in the city who were not what they appeared, the city itself betrayed naive faith

⁶⁴ Vladimir Kirillov, “Gorod,” *Stikhotvoreniia 1914–1918* (Petrograd, 1918), 26. See also M. Liberson, *Stradanie odinochestva* (St. Petersburg, 1909), 30.

⁶⁵ N. Liublin, “O Petrograde: stikhi: Veчерom,” *Novyi zhurnal dlia vsekh*, 1916, nos. 2–3 (February–March): 59.

⁶⁶ Graf Amori, *Tainy Nevskogo prospekta*, 3–4.

⁶⁷ Mikhail Bonch-Tomashevskii, *Kniga o tango: iskusstvo i seksual’nost’* (Moscow, 1914), 21.

⁶⁸ Kaled, “Ivanushkovtsy,” *S-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, 9 (22) December 1910, 2.

⁶⁹ Ol’ga Gridina, “Gorod-obmanshchik,” *Gazeta-kopeika*, 24 December 1913, 3.

in appearance as reality. Paradoxically, this shattering of illusion meant seeing the city's mask for what it was and thus partly removing it—even if this meant only looking nakedly at the darkness beneath or yielding to the honest darkness of death.

Indeed, urban death was both ubiquitous and often masked in mystery. Unknown corpses were discovered in various parts of the city, lying on the street with bullet wounds to their head (“who is he?” was the typical headline),⁷⁰ washed up in the Neva (“who are you, unknown woman in a pink skirt?”),⁷¹ at the bottom of an apartment stairway in a building in which no one knew them,⁷² and even in cemeteries.⁷³ The causes of death were often a complete mystery. Of course, many of these mysterious bodies were suicides, though suicide only underscored the depth of what was not knowable. Murders also reminded readers of the unknown. About a brutally murdered man found early one morning in 1908, *Gazeta-kopeika* characteristically inquired, “Who is he? How did he come here? Does he have any close ones? Who killed him?—Nothing is known. The dark autumn night guards its secrets.”⁷⁴ Violence, the newspapers observed with dismay, might come from the hands of even the “respectably dressed” (*prilichno odetye*).⁷⁵ Murderous evil in the modern city was repeatedly and melodramatically portrayed as lurking behind masks of propriety.

The “spirit of deceit” (*dukh obmana*) pervaded every corner of city life. The “average” modern man, a journalist noted, wakes up in the morning and washes with soap made of chemicals, cleans his teeth with a celluloid brush, drinks ersatz coffee with “milk” that has mainly a “symbolic relation” to the real thing, eats artificial foods, wears clothes made of artificial materials. He goes to work in an office where he keeps accounts on falsified goods, or in a factory where they make falsified products, or for a newspaper “dedicated to falsifying the news of life.” He eats a half-artificial lunch, drinks poisonous

⁷⁰ *Peterburgskii listok*, 17 November 1905, 4.

⁷¹ *Malen'kaia gazeta*, 3 August 1915, 3.

⁷² *Malen'kaia gazeta*, 28 December 1915, 3.

⁷³ *Peterburgskii listok*, 2 June 1913, 4.

⁷⁴ *Gazeta-kopeika*, 17 September 1908, 3.

⁷⁵ For example, *Gazeta-kopeika*, 22 October 1911, 3; *Peterburgskii listok*, 12 January 1910, 5, and 13 January 1910, 5.

beverages, and then goes home at day's end on machine-made paths. Even his leisure is surrounded by "false and surrogate" mechanically produced music, mechanically reproduced art, and "surrogate" literature—none of which can satisfy his spiritual needs any more than artificial foods can satisfy his body.⁷⁶ The falsification of commercial products with the intent of deceiving consumers seemed to be the equivalent of bait-and-switch confidence tricks played out on the more elevated stage of the commercial marketplace. Milk, it was reported, was sometimes made with borax, soda, and water; coffee was made with grain and bread but few coffee beans; medicines, especially widely advertised patent medicines, contained nothing that could heal; butter was created out of various cheap ingredients (the subject of a huge trial in St. Petersburg in 1910); and sand and even pieces of metal were used to increase the sold weight of a product. These were sometimes simple and old-fashioned falsifications; sometimes quite "scientifically" complex processes were used.⁷⁷

Commercial advertisements, which appeared in large numbers in newspapers and popular magazines and were posted along every major city street, were the intimate partner in falsification and deception. The metaphor of the mask was sometimes explicitly brought to mind: when one writer viewed the "cacophony" of advertising posters covering the façades of city building, he saw the city wearing "masquerade costumes."⁷⁸ Commentators were especially disturbed by the proliferation of print ads by "charlatans" promising cures or prevention for various ailments associated with city life, such as cholera, consumption, and venereal disease, or promising to reveal (if you purchase this book) the keys to happiness and success.⁷⁹ Victims of fictive business investment opportu-

⁷⁶ G. Tsyperovich, "Fal'sifikatsiia i surrogat," *Sovremennyi mir*, 1912, no. 1 (July): 147–81 (quotations from 175–78).

⁷⁷ Boris Frommet, "Fal'sifikatsiia i bor'ba s neiu," *Sovremennik*, 1914, no. 3 (February): 90–98; "Fal'sifikatsiia medikamentov," *Vesna*, 1910, nos. 47–48: 246; *Peterburgskii listok*, 6 July 1910, 3. See also *Petrogradskii listok*, 18 December 1915, 5.

⁷⁸ E. Baumgarten, "Torzhestvo reklamy," *Gorodskoe delo*, 1909, no. 4 (15 February): 36.

⁷⁹ *Gazeta-kopeika*, 3 June 1908, 3; 5 September 1908, 3; *Vesna*, 1910, nos. 47–48: 246; Frommet, "Fal'sifikatsiia," 95.

nities were usually recruited through newspapers advertisements—adding them to the list of “victims of advertisement.”⁸⁰ Such advertisements were nothing but “‘psychological’ deception” and “extortion.”⁸¹

“If the nineteenth century was the age of steam and electricity,” one journalist concluded, “the twentieth century deserves the honored title of the age of falsification [*vek fal’sifikatsii*],”⁸² and St. Petersburg was its Russian capital. While the term falsification was properly reserved for deceptive consumer practices, it stood for a deeper spirit of falsification thought to define modern public life. It seemed that “counterfeit [*poddelka*] can be seen in everything.” “Honor, conscience, science, and love are also falsified.”⁸³ Truth itself became illusory.

Newspapers were complicit in all this. Ideally, the press was the citizen’s essential guide to life in the city, including to its lies. And yet, as some newspaper columnists themselves admitted, the commercial press was also often a performance and a disguise. “What is truth?” Ol’ga Gridina asked rhetorically. To illustrate this ancient question “in its application to modern times” (*sovremennost*), she suggested that one “picture the ordinary city dweller [*obyvatel*] with a newspaper in front of him.” Even leaving aside political news—where, on top of the normal failures of accurate reporting, censorship (though she could not mention this) distorted the truth—the papers are filled with falsification. Concerning the everyday accidents, crimes, and other events that the press so extensively reported—including the many stories of masquerade explored here—how can one discern the real amid all the “contradictory news”? Amid all the fabrications and inventions that “some” papers regularly printed—“false news, events that never happened, made up stories”—how can one know any longer what is true? This was all part of the spectacle of urban life: stories “to please the crowd” (*ugodit’ tolpe*).⁸⁴ Or as her colleague “The Wanderer” at *Gazeta-*

⁸⁰ “Zhertvy reklamy,” *Gazeta-kopeika*, 1 September 1911, 3.

⁸¹ *Gazeta-kopeika*, 3 June 1908, 3.

⁸² Frommett, “Fal’sifikatsiia,” 90.

⁸³ *Gazeta-kopeika*, 13 July 1908, 2.

⁸⁴ Ol’ga Gridina, “Vrany,” *Gazeta-kopeika*, 7 January 1910, 3.

kopeika put it, the press told stories to fill the “inner emptiness” in people’s lives: “We greedily throw ourselves on the newspapers as at a spectacle.”⁸⁵

Uncertainty and unknowability, and the moral danger lurking in this darkness, were pervasive themes in stories of urban disguise and simulation. The *neznakomets*—the stranger, the unknown one—was everywhere: thieves, pickpockets, muggers, confidence men, and other perpetrators of everyday crimes in the public sphere were often described as *neznakomye* or *neizvestnye* (unknown). But surrounding these figures was a much greater presence of the strange and unknown (of *neznakomstvo*) in the city, of what could be seen but not understood, or seen only vaguely and in shadow. Modern city life appeared to be a dark theater of deception, imposture, and masquerade—in philosophical terms, a “world dominated by its phantasmagorias.”

Unmasking

Most journalistic writing about masks in everyday life sought to unmask these mysteries of the city. Newspapers reported masquerades partly to shed light on the many dark corners of the city, to give readers knowledge about what was hidden. By publishing stories of “masked” performance and deceit, the press sought to make the city legible, to disenchant it, to map its moral landscape. These stories were often told as melodramas, the conventions of which include not only emotional excess but also a tidy Manichean dualism between good and evil. In melodrama, stories of deception and mistaken identities are ubiquitous, but they are always resolved by unmasking.⁸⁶ Frequent and often detailed reports on criminal trials were similarly said to “lift the curtain hiding grotesque [*chudovishchnye*] mores and monstrous ways of thinking.”⁸⁷ The police and the judiciary, of course, were on the front lines of the effort to un-

⁸⁵ Skitalets, “Adskie zhmurki,” *Gazeta-kopeika*, 10 February 1910, 4.

⁸⁶ On melodrama in Russian culture, including its “trafficking in secrets,” see McReynolds et al., *Imitations of Life*.

⁸⁷ *Peterburgskii listok*, 1 June 1913, 1.

mask deceit. Many urban writers set themselves the same mission. "Off with the mask!" proclaimed the author of "true life novels" (*romany-byli*) about masked seducers of young girls and other moral sores of everyday Petersburg life.⁸⁸ "Off with the mask!" proclaimed the author of a book on the homosexual subculture of St. Petersburg.⁸⁹ Their self-proclaimed goal was to "lift slightly the curtain covering the surface appearances of decency [*vneshnaia blagopristoinost'*], to open for a moment the hermetic seal on the Petrograd cesspit," and to reveal (changing metaphors again) the backstage realities of the "dirty skirts and torn stockings" of pretty actresses.⁹⁰ In seeking to expose the "unvarnished truth,"⁹¹ of course, these writers also sought moral clarity. Removing masks was an ethical act both in its insistence on the truth and in its uncovering of hidden evil. Masquerade, in these cases, was treated as a simple performance of deceit: people were hiding their true selves behind false masks. There was nothing ambiguous about this concealment: the surfaces were made respectable in order to hide intent that was malevolent and criminal.

But lifting the veil and removing the masks covering the city's mysteries did not always bring a sense of mastery. Often, it seemed, one's gaze could not penetrate the "blue fog" of the metropolis. As both police and journalists so often concluded, much remained hidden and dark—too many *aféristy* remained unmasked and free, too many suicides and murders remained unexplained, too many "unknown strangers" (*neznakomtsy*) wandered the streets with their secrets still hidden. Fact and fiction blurred. And people continually "deceived themselves" about themselves. The "power of illusion" was overwhelming.⁹² Moral clarity was just as elusive. Even anxious reporters and essayists could recognize the allure of transgression that masquerade allowed. For all their dismay, they could not but notice the power masked performances possessed. Some reporters grudgingly admired (as likely did their readers) the "cunning"

⁸⁸ Graf Amori, *Kavalery Shneider*, 4; and *Tainy Nevskogo prospekta*, 4.

⁸⁹ V.P. Ruadze, *K sudu! ... Gomooseksual'nyi Peterburg* (St. Petersburg, 1908), 114.

⁹⁰ Graf Amori, *Tainy Nevskogo prospekta*, 4.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² I. Davidson, "Sila illiuzii," *Novyi zhurnal dlia vsekh*, 1912, no. 7 (July): 93.

(*lovkost*) of these criminals, the impressiveness of their appearance and performance, their constant innovation. In the anonymous landscape of the modern metropolis, the right appearance gave people real power over others. And pleasure, too. It mattered, of course, that these tales unfolded in tsarist Russia. Transgressive public display could be especially potent and pleasurable in a society where the individual still had limited rights and opportunities.

Russian contemporaries, however, rarely found this landscape of unsettled and ambiguous public display alluring or liberating. If reporters and commentators seemed at times to see the power and pleasure of masquerade—the empowering pleasure of performing identities, the benefit of illicit material gain, and the enjoyment in writing and reading these stories—they seemed even more certain that this was a dark power and an immoral pleasure. This was read as emblematic of Russia’s experience of modern disorder and crisis. The constant presence of strangers and of the experience of being a stranger, the elusiveness and ambiguity of all appearance, the endless parade of masking and unmasking, and the many obstacles to knowledge and legibility revealed a troubling moral map of St. Petersburg as a modern city, where strangers continually slid in and out of the shadows of city life. Beyond this, it suggested something troubling about the nature of “our times”—these modern times. Worse still, when masks *were* removed, the truth that was revealed was too often a black truth about the human personality and human morality that perhaps was better left hidden and unknown. The modern city had become a phantasmagoria of light and mirrors, but one that paradoxically produced a great deal of darkness.

3. Modernist Visions and Mass Politics in Late Imperial Kiev

Faith Hillis

The rise of mass politics—no less than the appearance of trams, department stores, and factories—marked fin-de-siècle Europe’s passage into modernity. From Paris to Prague, representatives of the lower middle and working classes rose up to challenge the bourgeois-liberal domination of the continent’s cities. The practitioners of this “politics in a new key” famously described by historian Carl E. Schorske created an emotionally charged and mass-oriented political style that established new centers of gravity on the extreme left and extreme right of the ideological spectrum. In the process, they signaled the transition from the era of notable politics to the age of mass mobilization.¹

Specialists on late Imperial Russia have studied the political modernization of the empire from several vantage points. They have reconstructed the efforts of workers, professionals, and voluntary associations to wrest power from the imperial state.² They have traced the achievements as well as the vicissitudes of Russia’s experiments in urban self-government and parliamentarianism.³ Yet

¹ Schorske, “Politics in a New Key”; also Lidtke, *The Alternative Culture*; Eley, *Forging Democracy*, 47–108; John W. Boyer, *Political Radicalism*; Nord, *Paris Shopkeepers*; Lindenberger, *Straßenpolitik*.

² See, for example, Johnson, *Peasant and Proletarian*; Engelstein, *Moscow, 1905*; Surh, *1905 in St. Petersburg*; Wynn, *Workers, Strikes and Pogroms*; Balzer, *Russia’s Missing Middle Class*; Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*.

³ Thurston, *Liberal City*; Nardova, *Samoderzhavie*; Hosking, *The Russian Constitutional Experiment*; Shecket Korros, *A Reluctant Parliament*.

even the scholars who are most optimistic about the prospects of Russian civil society have tended to highlight the empire's divergence from general European political trends, showcasing the ways in which the intrusive and paternalistic state atomized society and frustrated the rise of mass politics.⁴ Indeed, common sense would seem to dictate that mass politics are fundamentally incompatible with autocratic governance.

This chapter focuses on a Russian city where mass politics flourished—Kiev, which was then located on the empire's southwestern periphery. As early as the late nineteenth century, that city had begun to develop a boisterous mass political system: well-defined camps of nationalists battled against convinced cosmopolitans; bands of revolutionaries struggled to defeat local defenders of the tsarist regime and Orthodox traditions. In the political unrest brought about by the 1905 revolution, a populist and anti-Semitic mass movement that railed against the evils of capitalism as well as socialism emerged as the major political force in the city. In the aftermath of the revolution, Kiev's large and well-organized right-wing political parties continued to expand their influence through street agitation as well as electoral victories.

The success of an extreme and mass-oriented right in Kiev gave the city an unusual place in imperial political and intellectual life. Kiev was the only large city in the empire dominated by the political right; in most other Russian cities, from Moscow and St. Petersburg to the nearby urban centers of Kharkov and Odessa, liberals and radical leftists who denounced the imperial state played the most prominent role in local politics. And in terms of tone and style, Kiev's mass politics bore a striking resemblance to political movements elsewhere on the continent. The Kiev right promoted a socially emancipatory yet antiliberal platform that closely resembled that endorsed by Karl Lueger's Christian Socials, who captured Vienna in 1897.⁵ And like the *Action Française*—generally considered Europe's first integral nationalist movement—Kiev activists championed a strong state capable of protecting peasants

⁴ A recent work that highlights the accomplishments as well as the limitations of late imperial civil society is Bradley, *Voluntary Associations*.

⁵ See Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis*.

from the existential threats supposedly posed by Jews, socialists, capitalists, and foreigners.⁶

How did mass politics manage to take root in an autocratic setting? And why did this expression of modernity occur in Kiev, nearly 1,000 miles from the centers of imperial power in Moscow and St. Petersburg? Rather than emphasizing the ways in which Russia's autocratic system thwarted the development of mass political processes, this chapter considers how official policies unwittingly enabled the rise of "politics in a new key" on the empire's southwestern frontier. Although Kiev was incorporated into Muscovy in the late seventeenth century, as late as the nineteenth century the tsarist state remained in an active struggle to stake its claims on the region. In 1830–31 and again in 1863, the Polish-Catholic nobility (or *szlachta*), which traditionally had dominated the region's high society and culture, organized insurrections that aimed to reconstitute an independent Polish state. Although the influence of the *szlachta* fell precipitously in the wake of these revolts, by then Kiev was witnessing a huge influx of Ukrainian peasants and Jews looking for work in the city's rapidly growing industrial and artisanal sectors. At the turn of the twentieth century, just over half of Kiev's 250,000 residents were native speakers of Russian; nearly a quarter spoke Ukrainian; about 13 percent were Yiddish- or Russian-speaking Jews; and about 6 percent were Polish speakers of the Catholic faith.⁷ It was precisely imperial bureaucrats' efforts to manage this contested, diverse, and rapidly growing city that gave rise to the ideas and practices that would later enable mass political mobilization.

⁶ See Weber, *Action Française*; Mazgaj, *The Action Française and Revolutionary Syndicalism*.

⁷ See *Pervaia vseobshchaia perepis' naseleniia Rossiiskoi imperii 1897 g.* (St. Petersburg: Izdanie tsentral'nogo statisticheskogo komiteta Ministerstva vnutrennikh del, 1904), volume 16, 98–99. Because the 1897 census relied on native language and confession to define ethnicity, it is challenging to make a more precise statement about the ethnic composition of Kiev. The number of Ukrainian speakers does not necessarily correlate to the number of ethnic Ukrainians, since a large percentage of the urban Ukrainian population spoke Russian at home. The census also likely underreported the Jewish population of Kiev; it was an open secret that tens of thousands of Jews resided illegally in the city, and this population was not fully accounted for.

Tsarist officials shared a common desire to transform Kiev into an orderly and well-governed imperial metropolis. However, their visions of what constituted the ideal modern polity varied sharply. One camp, well represented within the Kiev governor-general's office, firmly insisted on the need to promote the national concerns of the southwest's Orthodox East Slavs over the interests of other ethnonational communities. This group, to which I refer as nationalizing modernists, went as far as to encourage local peasants and workers to develop a national consciousness that defined itself against their Polish and Jewish neighbors. A separate camp of officials, associated with the Ministry of Finance in particular, viewed the economic development and industrialization of the city as the best means of rationalizing local governance and asserting imperial power in Kiev. I refer to this group as capitalist modernists; it looked to entrepreneurs of proven talent—regardless of their ethnic extraction or religious beliefs—to help transform the city into an economic powerhouse.

From their inception in the mid-nineteenth century, these two competing visions of modernity in the southwestern borderlands coexisted uneasily. Capitalist modernists created a diverse mercantile elite in Kiev and cultivated a spirit of accommodation within the urban *beau monde*. Nationalizing modernists denounced this very ethos of tolerance as dangerous, arguing that capitalism allowed the non-Orthodox, whom they alleged had exploited the toiling masses for centuries, to consolidate their control over local resources. By the 1890s, the ongoing dispute between nationalizing and capitalist modernists in the imperial bureaucracy had filtered down to society itself, informing a populist and antiliberal grassroots political movement that built on both visions of modernity. Drawing on the rising national consciousness of the city's Russian and Ukrainian population and widespread anger at the excesses of capitalism, intellectuals and politicians attributed the miserable conditions in which most city residents lived to the prevalence of non-Orthodox believers (especially Jews) among the urban economic elite. It was these same local demagogues who constructed a powerful political movement that called on the city's Orthodox residents to rise up against their "foreign" oppressors in the 1905 period. Imperial bureaucrats' efforts to consolidate state control of a contested borderland and to transform Kiev into an orderly and modern metropolis had accidentally

equipped local activists and intellectuals with the tools that they needed to create a boisterous mass political system.

Nationalizing Modernism

In the aftermath of the 1830–31 Polish insurrection, imperial administrators launched a concerted campaign to enhance state power and to streamline governance in Kiev. Between 1838 and 1850, the newly created governor-general's office constructed bridges connecting the city's deep ravines and forty new streets, mostly broad avenues. Engineers devised a systematic address system, which not only aided travel and tourism, but also assisted police in "knowing" the city and its inhabitants.⁸ As it transformed what had once been a conglomeration of hillside settlements into a unitary city, the governor-general's development program explicitly emphasized imperial claims on Kiev. Local bureaucrats changed street names to honor Orthodox saints, state institutions, autocratic rulers, and military heroes, and they established a university and a regional school system to promote imperial high culture.⁹

If official efforts to consolidate state power in the southwestern borderlands promoted imperial patriotism, elements of nationalizing modernism were already visible in the new policies, which relied on national classifications to distinguish between loyal subjects and possible turncoats. The campaign to "claim" Kiev as a Russian city explicitly defined Polish-Catholic culture as a dangerous force, denigrating the city's Polish heritage as it undermined the power of its Polish residents. Immediately after the 1830–31 insurrection, local authorities abolished Polish schools and banks and revoked Magdeburg law, which had allowed city residents to govern themselves since the early modern period, when the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had ruled right-bank Ukraine.¹⁰ Administrators in

⁸ Rybakov, *Nevidomi*, 185, 188.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 186, 189–90. See also, Shandra, *Kyivs'ke heneral-hubernatorstvo*, 25–35; Tarasenko, *Stanovlennia ta rozvytok*.

¹⁰ I. Kamanin, *Poslednie gody samoupravleniia Kieva po Magdeburgskomu pravu* (Kiev: Korchak-Novitskii, 1888).

the governor-general's office and the Ministry of Internal Affairs organized genealogical censuses to "unmask" Poles. Once they identified these potential fifth columns, bureaucrats subjected them to a full range of punitive measures, including a special taxation regime and removal from the ranks of the nobility.¹¹

As they singled out Poles for punishment solely based on their ethno-confessional identity, local officials also encouraged the city's Orthodox residents—many of whom were ethnic Ukrainians, or as officials then called them, Little Russians—to aid the official de-Polonization campaign. In 1843, the Kiev governor-general's office convened the Commission for the Collection of Ancient Acts, which aimed to gather historical documents that would prove that the city was a primordially Orthodox locale that had been subjected to Polish-Catholic culture by force.¹² The Commission soon became a gathering place for ethnic Ukrainian intellectuals, such as M.A. Maksimovich, P.A. Kulish, N.I. Kostomarov, and T.G. Shevchenko, who used the group's resources to decry the *szlachta*'s historical power in the region and its continuing domination of the Little Russian masses in contemporary life.¹³ Commission publications charged that Polish-Catholic power had "severed the internal moral connection" that once connected the Little Russian "aristocracy and simple folk [*narod*]." In villages, Polish nobles subjected Ukrainian peasants to a cruel feudal order and entrusted the keys of Orthodox churches to the Jews who managed their estates; in towns and cities, the *szlachta* allowed Jewish tavern keepers and money

¹¹ See Beauvois, *Le noble, le serf et le révizor*.

¹² See *Sbornik statei i materialov po istorii iugo-zapadnoi Rossii, izdavaemyi Komissiei dlia razbora drevnikh aktov, sostoiashchei pri Kievskom, Podol'skom i Volynskom General-Gubernatore* (Kiev: N.T. Korchak-Novitskii, 1911), 1.

¹³ Many accounts have focused on the emergence of the Ukrainian national movement and imperial efforts to manage it. See, for example, Savchenko, *Zaborona ukrainstva*; Miller, *The Ukrainian Question*; Vulpius, *Nationalisierung der Religion*. My work, by contrast, emphasizes the imbrication of the Russian and Ukrainian national projects, and considers the extent to which men such as Kostomarov, Kulish, and Shevchenko contributed to the creation of East Slavic nationalism while laying the groundwork for the development of a later Ukrainian national movement. For further details, see Hillis, *Children of Rus'*, especially part I.

lenders to dominate the Orthodox population.¹⁴ Though the Commission tended to take a dark view of Ukrainian history—presenting it as a “bloody battle” between Orthodox and Catholic culture—it celebrated violent peasant uprisings against the *szlachta*.¹⁵ Despite the Commission’s Little Russian particularism and its overt sympathy for *jacqueries*, the Kiev governor-general’s office remained an unstinting supporter of the group, financing its activities and creating an archive at Kiev University to showcase its findings.¹⁶ Kiev’s nationalizing modernists had realized that Little Russian consciousness could be a valuable tool in their campaign to strengthen imperial rule. For their part, Little Russian activists used the support they received from the local authorities to draw attention to the plight of the Ukrainian masses—and the threat that they saw in the continuing political and economic influence of non-Orthodox minorities in the region.

The 1863 Polish revolt highlighted the continuing threat posed by the *szlachta* of the borderlands, but it also raised the potential that the burgeoning national consciousness of Kiev’s Little Russian activists might evolve into full-fledged national separatism. Minister of the Interior P.A. Valuev expressed particular concern that Ukrainian cultural activities might undermine imperial unity in a time of political crisis, and imposed new restrictions on Ukrainian-language publications aimed at a popular audience.¹⁷ Despite these new policies, the Kiev governor-general’s office remained steadfast in its support for the Commission, which continued to insist that

¹⁴ The quote is from *Arkhiv Iugo-zapadnoi Rossii* 1:1 (Kiev: Universitetskaia tipografiia, 1859), LXXXVI–LXXXVII. On the rural order, see P. Kulish, *Zapiski o iuzhnoi Rusi* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1989) [original 1856], 166; on cities, *Arkhiv Iugo-zapadnoi Rossii* 5:1 (Kiev: Universitetskaia tipografiia, 1869), 1–94.

¹⁵ Quote from F.G. Lebedintsev, *Arkhiv Iugo-zapadnoi Rossii* 1:2, 2; see also *Arkhiv Iugo-zapadnoi Rossii* 1:1, IX.

¹⁶ “Tsentral’nye arkhivy drevnikh aktovykh knig: Vilenskii i Kievskii,” *Zhurnal ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia* (1883): 37; O.I. Levitskii, *Piatidesiatiletie Kievskoi Komissii dlia razbora drevnikh aktov, 1843–1893: Istoriicheskaia zapiska o eia deiatel’nosti* (Kiev: S.V. Kul’zhenko, 1893), 14.

¹⁷ For further details on the debate within the imperial bureaucracy about the proper relationship of the governor-general’s office with Little Russian activists, see Hillis, “Ukrainophile Activism.”

raising awareness of the historical and contemporary struggles of the Ukrainian masses against their “foreign” captors would only complement the official de-Polonization campaign.¹⁸ The group’s official publications indulged in ever more radical populist and nationalist rhetoric, presenting peasant revolts, for example, as wars of national liberation in which the Ukrainian masses attempted to throw off Polish and Jewish “exploitation.”¹⁹ Even as the imperial authorities subjected Poles to new taxes and political restrictions, in the wake of the revolt Commission members lobbied the state to enact harsher measures against the *szlachta*. The group’s president even expressed his desire to strip Poles of all “civil and political rights ... so that priests and the *szlachta* will be deprived of ... all possibilities further to nourish their permanent illusions and to continue their underground treasonous work against us.”²⁰

Indeed, emboldened by the continuing support for nationalizing modernism within the governor-general’s office, Kiev’s Little Russian activists managed to reach out to broader segments of the urban population over the 1860s and 1870s. In 1864, V.Ia. Shul’gin, a member of the Commission for the Collection of Ancient Acts, founded the city’s first daily newspaper, *Kievlianin*. Published in Russian—so as to reach the broadest possible audience and to observe the letter of Val’uev’s new language policy—the paper aimed to raise awareness of the cultural traditions of the Little Russians and their continued suffering under “the triple yoke of Catholic clergy, Poles (landlords, rentiers, and estate managers), and Jews.”²¹ In 1872, Shul’gin joined forces with other veterans of the Kiev Commission for the Collection of

¹⁸ *Sbornik statei i materialov po istorii iugo-zapadnoi Rossii*, 14–15.

¹⁹ *Arkhiv Iugo-zapadnoi Rossii* 3,3 (Kiev: I. Zavadskii, 1876), 1, 3, 5.

²⁰ The quote is from Savchenko, *Zaborona ukrainstva*, 364. On the intensification of the de-Polonization campaign after 1863, see Beauvois, *La bataille de la terre*; Rodkiewicz, *Russian Nationality Policy*; Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia*.

²¹ V.Ia. Shul’gin, “Iugo-zapadnyi krai pod upravleniem D.G. Bibikova,” *Drevniaia i novaia Rossiia* 6 (1879): 89. The paper also praised the ethnographic research and political activism of Little Russian activists as powerful weapons of de-Polonization. See, for example, “Zapiski ob universitetskoi zhizni (1860–1864),” *Kievlianin*, 25 August 1864, 1; M.P. Drahomanov, “Malorossiia i ee slovesnosti,” in *Vybrane* (Kiev: Lybid’, 1991), 42.

Ancient Acts to launch a local chapter of the Imperial Geographic Society, which conducted research on folk culture and regional demographics as part of an effort to promote “Ukrainian self-organization” and to “counteract” Polish culture.²² In the early 1880s, Commission members launched *Kievskaiia starina*, a monthly journal of ethnography and local history. Journal contributors, who hoped to highlight the “internal, spiritual” life of Little Russia that had been unsullied by non-Orthodox influence, published original Ukrainian-language historical documents, pioneered Ukrainian national historiography, and worked to compile a Ukrainian-language dictionary.²³

Even after 1863, then, when Valuev articulated growing concern about official promotion of ethno-national consciousness, nationalizing modernists in the governor-general’s office consistently strove to use Little Russian patriotism in the battle against Polish-Catholic civilization. *Kievlianin* became the unofficial paper of record for the southwestern borderlands, and benefited from a government subsidy.²⁴ *Kievskaiia starina*, too, was underwritten by the imperial state, which even intervened to save it from bankruptcy on several occasions.²⁵ Kiev’s governor-generals insisted that far from a threat to imperial unity, the Little Russian consciousness emanating from Kiev promised to protect the empire from Polish threats. (They failed, however, to shelter Kiev Geographic Society members from accusations that their local patriotism had degenerated into Ukrainian separatism, and a tsarist decree closed the division in 1876, exiled some of its organizers, and implemented further restrictions against the use of Ukrainian in public.)²⁶

²² Savchenko, *Zaborona ukrainstva*, 233–34. For an example of the Kiev Geographic Society’s work, see P.P. Chubinskii, *Trudy etnograficheskoi-statisticheskoi ekspeditsii v Zapadno-Russkii krai* (St. Petersburg: Imperatorskoe Russkoe Geograficheskoe obshchestvo, 1872).

²³ The quote is from TsDIAUK [Tsentral’nyi derzhavnyi istorichnyi arkhiv Ukrainy, m. Kyiv], KMF-19, op. 1, d. 20, ll. 3-4ob; see also TsDIAUK, f. 295, op. 1, d. 16, l. 2; Maryna Palienko, “*Kievskaiia starina*” (3 vols.) (Kiev: Tempora, 2005).

²⁴ Starozhil, *Kiev v vos’midesiatykh godakh* (Kiev: Petr Barskii, 1910), 64.

²⁵ TsDIAUK, KMF-19, op. 1, d. 20, ll. 27–28.

²⁶ See NBU IR [Natsional’na biblioteka Ukrainy imeni V.I. Vernads’kogo, Instytut rukopysu], I.8004; Miller, *Ukrainian Question*, 179–210.

In an effort to make Kiev a more legible and governable city, nationalizing modernists undermined the imperial estate system, assigning privileges and responsibilities—and distinguishing between loyal and potentially subversive subjects—according to ethno-confessional criteria. As they enacted punitive measures against Polish-Catholic residents in an effort to strip the *szlachta* of its power, they also encouraged Little Russian consciousness as a healthy antidote to Polish patriotism. In many respects, the nationalizing modernist campaign was a remarkable success: it delegitimated Polish claims on the region and created a new Orthodox intelligentsia to replace the *szlachta* as the leaders of culture. However, official promotion of a brand of Little Russian consciousness that was built on radically populist ideas and expressed a desire to avenge the centuries-long suffering of the simple folk through violence would complicate the task of governing the borderlands and sow new divisions among Kiev's residents.

Capitalist Modernism

As nationalizing modernists in the Kiev governor-general's office worked to claim the southwestern borderlands by punishing the "disloyal" Poles and cultivating an alliance with Little Russian populists, a rival camp of capitalist modernists looked to successful entrepreneurs of various ethnicities to turn the city into an economic powerhouse. A small military garrison for the first decades of the early nineteenth century, by mid-century, Kiev was poised to become a major industrial power. Technological advances in sugar refining—the city's major industry—and a steep increase in sugar prices in the 1840s and 1850s drew a colorful cast of venture capitalists and entrepreneurs to the city.²⁷ Anxious to maximize Kiev's potential economic growth, local bureaucrats offered tax breaks and other economic incentives to merchants and entrepreneurs who relocated to the city. These inducements convinced many landed Little Russian gentry families, such as the Tereshchenkos, to aban-

²⁷ Oleksandr Ohloblin, *Narysy z istorii ukrains'koi fabryky: Krypats'ka fabryka* (Kiev: Proletar, 1931), 147.

don the gentility of provincial life for the quick profits to be made in Kiev's sugar industry.²⁸ Kiev's mid-century economic boom also created new opportunities for entrepreneurs of very modest origins to join the urban *beau monde*: several men who had been born serfs invested the profits that they made peddling artisanal goods at regional trade fairs in sugar refineries, becoming multi-millionaires by the 1860s.²⁹

But Orthodox believers were not the only entrepreneurs to profit from the attempts of the capitalist modernists to develop Kiev's economy. In the late 1850s, following lobbying by the ministry of finance, the imperial ministries lifted the blanket ban on Jewish settlement in Kiev in an effort to encourage economic development.³⁰ Among the first of these "useful" Jews who settled in Kiev—mostly entrepreneurs who had founded successful businesses in nearby shtetls—were the Brodskii family, which acquired a vast network of breweries and sugar factories in the region, and D.S. Margolin, who founded the Dniepr Steamship Company. By the 1870s, tens of thousands of Jews lived in Kiev, where they played a vital role in its flourishing economy: by 1874, almost 90 percent of the city's first-guild merchants were Jewish; nearly 12 percent of the Jewish-owned industrial establishments in the entire empire were located in Kiev province.³¹ In recognition of the key role that Jewish entrepreneurs played in the city's economy, local authorities granted them waivers and exemptions that permitted them to buy homes in the city's most desirable neighborhoods and even to obtain grand rural estates.³²

The capitalist modernists' efforts to develop the city's economy paid off handsomely. Already by the late 1860s, venture capital

²⁸ See Kovalinskii, *Metsenaty Kiieva*; Kovalinskii, *Sem'ia Tereshchenko*.

²⁹ A.P. Ogloblin, *Ocherki istorii ukrainskoi fabрики: predkapitalisticheskaia fabrika* (Kiev: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo Ukrainy, 1925), 148–67.

³⁰ Anan'ich, *Bankirskie doma*, 39.

³¹ DAK [Derzhavnyi arkhiv mista Kyeva], f. 163, op. 39, d. 211, l. 56; *Recueil de matériaux sur la situation économique des israélites de Russie d'après l'enquête de la Jewish Colonization Association* (Paris: Librairies Félix Alcan et Guillaumin Réunies, 1906), 2:201–5.

³² DAK, f. 163, op. 7, d. 743, l. 1. For more on Kiev and its Jewish community, see Meir, *Kiev, Jewish Metropolis*.

investments in Kiev outstripped those of Moscow and Petersburg by more than twofold, and the city hosted one of the empire's most lucrative and rapidly growing commercial sectors.³³ The local sugar barons, eager to maximize their credit opportunities and their profits, established dense networks of private banks, commodities exchanges, and mutual aid associations.³⁴ In Kiev—which was rapidly acquiring a reputation as the empire's capitalist Wild West—social status tended to be conveyed by one's wealth and entrepreneurial talent, rather than one's social or economic background. Jewish, Russian, and Ukrainian businessmen freely mixed in the city's private clubs and served together in its powerful Stock Committee.³⁵ Kiev's Jewish business elite joined their Gentile colleagues in the elected municipal дума as well; indeed, owing to their strong representation among the entrepreneurial elite, Jews enjoyed disproportionately strong representation in the body and in the upper curiae of voters.³⁶

By the 1880s, as the empire-wide push for industrialization grew more powerful and Kiev's role in the global sugar business became more prominent, the relationship between the city's multiethnic economic elite and the imperial state grew only closer.³⁷ Together, mercantile elites and officials representing the Ministry of Finance (all four finance ministers between 1880 and 1903 had links to Kiev and had benefited from its economic boom) pursued a capitalist modernity in which state investments and protectionist policies benefited rationally organized enterprises.³⁸ In 1885, after lobbying

³³ D.I. Pikhno, *Kommercheskie operatsii Gosudarstvennogo Banka* (Kiev: Universitetskaya tipografiia 1876), 88–89.

³⁴ K.G. Voblyi, *Narysy z istorii rosiis'ko-ukrains'koi tsukroburiakovoï promyslovosti* (Kiev: Vseukrains'ka akademiia nauk, 1931) 3:1, 119; Kasymenko et al., *Istoriia Kyeva*, 409.

³⁵ Starozhil, *Kiev v vos'midesiatykh godakh*, 92.

³⁶ DAK, f. 163, op. 39, d. 211, l. 51.

³⁷ By 1887, the sixty sugar refineries located in Kiev province produced more than one-third of the empire's sugar—a proportion that would double by the turn of the century. See L.F. Volokhov, *Sakharnaia promyshlennost' v Rossii v tsifrakh* (Kiev: R.K. Lubkovskii, 1913), 43.

³⁸ On the “Kiev clique” within the Ministry of Finance, see Rieber, *Merchants and Entrepreneurs*, 108. For the ministry's plea to place the economic development of the empire as a top priority of governance, see *Obzor deiatel'nosti Minister-*

from the Kiev Stock Committee, the Ministry of Finance agreed to dismantle the free trade policies that had prevailed since the Crimean War, implementing new tariffs that favored major industrial producers.³⁹ Two years later, the city's major sugar producers, led by Lev Brodskii, formed a cartel, which set production levels for sugar and exported quantities exceeding this limit overseas, thus increasing producers' profit margins. By 1893, 206 of the empire's 226 sugar refineries had joined the cartel; in 1895, after extensive lobbying, the cartel officially gained recognition from S.Iu. Witte's Ministry of Finance.⁴⁰ Sugar speculation and the price fixing practices of Kiev's multicultural elites now gained official sanction from the imperial government, marking the apex of capitalist modernism in Kiev.

By the turn of the century, Kiev's leading entrepreneurs had begun to form private utility companies, which they saw both as a wise investment and as a means of giving Kiev the face of a modern European city. The Brodskii's established a private water company; Margolin founded a public transit system, which launched the Russian Empire's first electric tram in 1894.⁴¹ The Brodskii's and Tereshchenkos—the latter apparently being the lone Gentile investors in the city's utility system—co-directed the municipal sewer company.⁴² But if Kiev's capitalist modernists cited the development of the utility companies as *prima facie* evidence of their commitment to transforming the city into a sanitary and orderly metropolis, the utilities interests, more than any other single factor, created new social and geographic distinctions. The high cost of the water filtration system developed by the Brodskii's engineers deprived the poor of a safe water supply—while guaranteeing the shareholders of the waterworks immense profits. Margolin's tram

stva finansov v tsarstvovanie Imperatora Aleksandra III (1881–1894) (St. Petersburg: V. Kirshbaum, 1902), 2–3.

³⁹ Snow, *The Years 1881–1894*, 8.

⁴⁰ "Sveklosakharnaia normirovka," in *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'* (St. Petersburg: Brokgauz-Efron, 1900), 29: 27.

⁴¹ Tron'ko et al., *Istoriia gorodov*, 158; Khiterer, "Jewish Life in Kyiv," 83.

⁴² P. Golubiatnikov, *Spravka o khode dela po rasshireniiu Kievskoi kanalizatsii v chetyrekhletie s 1902 po 1906 god: Prilozheniia* (Kiev: Tipografiia Okruzhnogo Shtaba, 1906), 255–62.

network served only the central areas of the city, where its wealthy congregated; in any case, the base fare of five kopecks would have been out of the reach of most proletarians.⁴³ And the electric lights installed throughout the city in the 1890s illuminated the central districts, but left the peripheral neighborhoods, with growing crime rates, to languish in darkness.⁴⁴

The capitalist modernists had transformed the face and the society of Kiev, endowing the city with a well-developed industrial sector, a modern infrastructure, and a close-knit, ethnically diverse elite. But the development of capitalism also sowed new divisions and conflicts. As the state directed a growing portion of its resources toward the rich, the poor found themselves ever more marginalized. Even foreign commentators viewed government support for the sugar cartel as a startling example of predatory capitalism, and the self-interest and graft endemic to the private utility companies provoked great anger from politicians and ordinary people.⁴⁵ The fact that capitalist modernism reached its apex at the height of the de-Polonization campaign fostered further conflict. The Little Russian intellectuals patronized by nationalizing modernists portrayed Ukrainian history and contemporary politics as a constant struggle between the Orthodox simple folk and their non-Orthodox “exploiters.” The key role that the non-Orthodox—especially Jews—played in urban economic and political life would provide ammunition to those who would seek to imbue resentment at the class differences that had emerged in the city with ethno-national antipathies.⁴⁶

⁴³ Tron’ko, *Istoriia gorodov*, 158.

⁴⁴ S.M. Boguslavskii, *Sputnik po g. Kievu* (Kiev: L.V. Khmeliovskii, 1913), 10.

⁴⁵ See, for example, *Appletons’ Annual Cyclopaedia and Register of Important Events of the Year: 1901* (New York, 1902), 595. By the turn of the century, Kharkov residents denounced the municipal utilities interests, which as in most other cities were controlled by French and Belgian firms, as a foreign “cabal” bleeding city residents of their last dime. See D.I. Bagalei and D.P. Miller, *Istoriia goroda Khar’kova za 250 let ego sushchestvovaniia (s 1655-go po 1905-i god)* (Khar’kov: M. Zil’berberg i synov’ia, 1912), 397. In Kiev, where prominent local plutocrats, not faceless foreign capitalists, controlled the utilities, anger would grow even more intense.

⁴⁶ On the nexus between Jews and capitalism in modern Europe, consult Penslar, *Shylock’s Children*; Muller, *Capitalism and the Jews*.

Antiliberal Populism

The tensions between nationalizing and capitalist modernism in Kiev bred a third distinctly modern movement—antiliberal populism. As early as the 1880s, a new generation of intellectuals who had come of age during the de-Polonization campaign began to translate the ideas of the nationalizing modernists into urban politics, working to “liberate” the city’s simple folk from their foreign “exploiters” through the creation of a grassroots, anticapitalist, anti-Semitic political movement. In 1879, D.I. Pikhno, the son of a petty trader who ultimately became a professor of economics at St. Vladimir’s University, succeeded Shul’gin as the editor of *Kievlianin*. Himself an alumnus of a school for underprivileged Orthodox children run by Little Russian radicals, Pikhno used the paper to attack the monopolistic practices and multicultural composition of Kiev’s capitalist elite.⁴⁷ Far from an accidental by-product of the capitalist system, the social inequalities that had arisen in the city, he argued, reflected Jewish entrepreneurs’ age-old efforts to dominate Little Russians. These abuses, he insisted, demanded enhanced state involvement to protect the welfare of the Orthodox toiling masses.⁴⁸ Pikhno did not limit his attacks on “Jewish interests” to the pages of his newspaper; he also became a fixture of public meetings in which he denounced non-Orthodox elites in no uncertain terms.⁴⁹

Pikhno’s views—and his efforts to introduce them to a broader public—were well received by activists working within the city’s formal political institutions. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, politically active Orthodox merchants and professionals hailing from the city’s struggling peripheral neighborhoods convened meetings and launched voter mobilization drives. As a result of these efforts, many of these activists won seats in the city дума, where they styled themselves as defenders of ordinary city residents. Newly

⁴⁷ NBU IR, I. 8076, I. 5.

⁴⁸ *Kievlianin*, 18 February 1883, 2; “Kredit i sel’skoe khoziaistvo,” *Kievlianin*, 24 February 1883, 1; “Sakharnoe proizvodstvo i normirovka,” *Kievlianin*, 21 January 1894, 1.

⁴⁹ For example, *Otchet Kievskogo Birzhevogo Komiteta za 1902 god* (Kiev: Frontskovich, 1903), 48–51.

elected delegates such as the accountant A.L. Tsytovich, the railroad engineer N.P. Dobrynin, and the doctor E.I. Afanas'ev lobbied eloquently for the need to eliminate graft and to improve public services in the urban outskirts.⁵⁰ But their campaign for social renewal was infused with sharp denunciations of the capitalist modernists' lack of concern for the greater good. Dobrynin complained that private capitalists—many of whom, he pointed out, were Jewish—had ravaged the southwestern region, acquiring its most valuable resources for their personal use.⁵¹ Afanas'ev darkly warned that local plutocrats' disinterest in improving public health placed ordinary people on the “path to extinction.”⁵² In short, building on an earlier intellectual tradition that opposed the interests of the borderlands' Orthodox masses and its largely non-Orthodox elites, antiliberal populists insisted that the plight of Kiev's average people could not be improved until their “foreign exploiters” were stripped of their power.

As the turn of the twentieth century neared, antiliberal populism grew more influential in the city council; indeed, in 1894 observers described right-wing activists as comprising a vocal and organized party—a remarkable fact, given that political parties technically remained illegal in Russia for another ten years.⁵³ In preparation for the 1902 municipal elections, antiliberal populist activists organized massive neighborhood meetings on the city's periphery. These efforts led to the emergence of the New Duma party, which relentlessly attacked the capitalist modernist status quo and won strong representation in the city council on election day.⁵⁴ Once in power, the New Duma delegates continued to call for more responsive and transparent governance; again, they connected this task with the

⁵⁰ “Zasedanie dумы,” *Kievskoe slovo*, 11 August 1891, 3; see also Garol'd, *Nashi Glasnye: Otkrytki s momental'nyimi snimkami nashikh dumtsev* (Kiev: P.K. Lubkovskii, 1906), 47.

⁵¹ N.P. Dobrynin, *Russkie zheleznye dorogi i ikh slabye storony* (Kiev: I.N. Kushnerev, 1886), especially 13, 26–28, 33.

⁵² The quote is from “Gorodskie i mestnye izvestiia,” *Trud*, 16 March 1881, 1–2; see also DAK, f. 163, op. 8. d. 55, l. 524; DAK, f. 163, op. 8. d. 55, l. 795; “Zasedanie dумы,” *Kievskoe slovo*, 11 August 1891, 3.

⁵³ *Kievskoe slovo*, 10 February 1894, 3.

⁵⁴ “Predvybornaia agitatsiia,” *Kievskaiia gazeta*, 10 January 1902, 3.

battle against Jewish elites. P.V. Golubiatnikov, a military engineer and the leader of the party, attacked the previous city council for drawing up utilities contracts that offered huge financial concessions to the Brodskii family.⁵⁵ F.N. Iasnogurskii, another New Duma delegate, denounced the Stock Committee for lobbying the duma to build a railroad spur through the city center, which he alleged would destroy monuments to the city's Orthodox heritage.⁵⁶ As he put it, "The murmur of Jews is audible at every step, and we, the representatives of the city, by means of our strength and capability must silence this murmur and ... protect our confrères [*sobрати*] from catastrophes."⁵⁷

Having long marketed their platform as a path toward popular "liberation" from the oppression of the non-Orthodox, Kiev's antiliberal populists benefited the most from the rise of the Liberation Movement in the first years of the twentieth century. As city residents gathered to discuss politics in neighborhood meetings and on shop floors, antiliberal populism and the campaign against Jewish elites drove local politics. One of the many grassroots groups that sprang up in the city complained in a 1905 letter to the governor-general, "the religious center of the southwest region ... has been isolated ... by the shadow of Yiddom [*zhidovskaia ten'*], which renders us invisible."⁵⁸ Condemning "flippant" local inhabitants and corrupt officials for compromising the best interests of city residents, the group urged Orthodox believers to unite in the struggle against "foreign" influence.⁵⁹ Other pamphleteers warned that Jews planned to use the political crisis in Russia to expand their political power. "We are children of our country, and they are only guests," read one tract that circulated in August 1905. "We built and constructed our native Rus' with our blood and the blood of our ancestors; we should protect her from everything that is contrary to the

⁵⁵ Golubiatnikov, who won a position on the city sanitation committee, argued that Kiev was in urgent need of a public, city-wide sewer system: see Golubiatnikov, *Spravka o khode dela*.

⁵⁶ DAK, f. 163, op. 8, d. 94, ll. 415–16.

⁵⁷ DAK, f. 163, op. 8, d. 94, l. 75.

⁵⁸ TsDIAUK, f. 442, op. 855, d. 71, l. 28ob.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, ll. 28ob–29; ll. 31–32.

Russian spirit, remain loyal to our native antiquity.”⁶⁰ In Kiev, expressions of ethno-national pride and the desire to engage ordinary residents in formal political processes could not be separated from a broader campaign against capitalist modernism—and in particular, Jewish entrepreneurial elites.

The events of October 1905 further shifted political momentum in the favor of antiliberal populists. Early on the morning of 18 October, when word that the tsar had granted his subjects basic civil rights and an elective parliament reached Kiev, city residents poured out into the streets, excitedly conversing about the news. By mid-morning, tens of thousands had convened in front of the city council, where they cheered the “people’s liberation.” By afternoon, however, rumors began to circulate that local Jews were plotting to seize power, and that liberation could not be complete until “Jewish interests” were vanquished.⁶¹ As *Kievljanin* affiliates took to the streets, describing instances of alleged Jewish perfidy, Orthodox workers, artisans, and petty merchants convened neighborhood meetings that resolved “to teach the Yids a lesson.”⁶² By nightfall, these gatherings had degenerated into a pogrom, as protestors ransacked Jewish homes and businesses in both peripheral neighborhoods and the city center.⁶³ The mobilizing ideas and institutional networks that illiberal populists had used to promote social change had now become incubators of mass violence.

By the morning of 19 October, pogromists marched into the city’s most elite district, declaring their resolve to punish the “Jewish millionaires.”⁶⁴ The crowds destroyed numerous estates of Jewish sugar entrepreneurs as well as the apartment of D.S. Margolin’s son.⁶⁵ The most dramatic moments of the day unfolded outside one of the Brodskiis’ manors. As pogromists ransacked

⁶⁰ DAKO [Derzhavnyi arkhiv Kyivsk’oi oblasti], f. 2, op. 41, d. 222b, ll. 35ob–36.

⁶¹ TsDIAUK, f. 442, op. 855, d. 391, ch. 3, l. 267; TsDIAUK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 1057, l. 16.

⁶² E.F. Turau, *K istorii Kievskogo pogroma* (Kiev: Progress, 1906), 27; “Uchastniki patrioticheskoi manifestatsii,” *Kievskie otkliki*, 25 October 1905, 4.

⁶³ TsDIAUK, f. 442, op. 855, d. 391, ch. 1, l. 142ob.

⁶⁴ GARF [Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii], f. 102, OO, 1905, d. 1350, ch. 15, l. 163.

⁶⁵ TsDIAUK, f. 442, op. 855, d. 391, ch. 1, ll. 178–79.

the property of another prominent Jewish entrepreneur who lived next door, beating its inhabitant senseless, the university student Grigorii Brodskii fired a pistol at the assailants, killing one and injuring two. Police soon arrived to arrest Brodskii—and later stood by idly as *pogromshchiki* looted his home.⁶⁶ Despite Lev Brodskii's pleas to bureaucrats to halt the pogrom, the police did not subdue the violence for three days.⁶⁷ By the time the authorities regained control in the city, the pogrom had become the costliest outbreak of violence in the entire empire in 1905, having incurred 10.5 million rubles of damage and taken nearly 400 lives.⁶⁸ This explosion of mass violence decisively shifted political power away from the capitalist modernists; abandoned by the officials who had promoted and protected them, Kiev's Jewish elites proved unable to defend themselves against the politically mobilized masses.

In the wake of the pogrom, antiliberal populists grew still more outspoken. City council representatives such as Golubiatnikov continued to lament the "exploitation" of the city's workers by its homegrown capitalists; meanwhile, the body passed a resolution that heralded the violence as the beginning of a new era of popular engagement, in which Orthodox believers no longer would be forced to endure insults and oppression at the hands of Jews.⁶⁹ *Kievlianin* showcased similar sentiments, publishing letters from ordinary residents that portrayed the suffering that had befallen the Jewish elite as just deserts for their centuries of alleged exploitation.⁷⁰ Indeed, hundreds of unpublished letters, many of which describe

⁶⁶ "Kievskii okruzhnoi sud: Delo Grigoriia Brodskogo," *Pravo*, 30 November 1907, 2659–60.

⁶⁷ TsDIAUK, f. 442, op. 855, d. 391, ch. 1, l. 151.

⁶⁸ Figures from "Obvinitel'nyi akt," *Kievskaiia mysl'*, 7 December 1907, 4; "Die Dimensionen der Oktober-pogrome (1905)," in *Die Judenpogrome in Russland* (Cologne: Jüdischer Verlag, 1910), 1:209. A local commission charged with collecting materials on the pogrom, led by Lev Brodskii, estimated that 7,000 families had been touched by the violence (TsDIAUK, f. 1423, op. 1, d. 30, l. 14.).

⁶⁹ P. Golubiatnikov, *Sovety kievlianam, izbirateliam v gorodskuiu dumu* (Kiev: Petr Barskii, 1906), 4–7; "Pis'mo glasnym kievskoi gorodskoi dумы," *Kievlianin*, 4 November 1905, 3.

⁷⁰ *Kievlianin*, 27 October 1905, 3; "Ochevidets Mikhail Khanenko," *Kievlianin*, 27 October 1905, 3.

violent fantasies of purging Jewish influence from Kiev, remain in *Kievlianin*'s archive.⁷¹

Seeking to secure a dominant role in local political discourse, antiliberal populist activists worked doggedly to expand their popular support base among the city's working classes. They created their own youth groups and labor unions to combat organizing efforts by left-wing groups, and even a fund to support antiliberal city residents who had been victimized for their political views.⁷² They invited workers to testify in city squares about incidents of alleged Jewish exploitation, and organized meetings to explain to city residents why they should not elect "Yids, Poles, and other non-believers" to public office.⁷³ And they launched new penny papers that both heralded anti-Jewish violence as a heroic act of national self-defense and invited ordinary opponents of capitalist modernism to submit songs, articles, and poems describing their political views and activities.⁷⁴

In the end, the cross-class, antiliberal coalition that emerged from Kiev transformed everyday life and political culture in the city. Organized boycotts of Jewish-owned (or allegedly pro-Jewish) enterprises challenged the economic power of the capitalist modernists.⁷⁵ Military-style parades of right-wing activists through the city undermined the spirit of accommodation that the entrepreneurial elite had fostered.⁷⁶ A combination of dirty tricks and voter

⁷¹ TsDIAUK, f. 296, op. 1, d. 1–2.

⁷² Consult "Partiia pravogo poriadka," *Kievskii golos*, 31 October 1906, 3; "K predvybornoi agitatsii," *Kievskii golos*, 2 November 1906, 2; "Iz partiinoi zhizni," *Novyi vek*, 14 February 1906, 3; "Iz zhizni politicheskikh partii," *Kievskii vestnik*, 21 January 1906, 3; "Sobranie chlenov 'kassy zhertv dolga'," *Kievlianin*, 23 October 1906, 3; "Strakhovanie monarkhistov ot revoliutsionerov," *Zakon i pravda*, 11 October 1906, 3; TsDIAUK, f. 442, op. 636, d. 647, ch. I, l. 659.

⁷³ "Mestnaia khronika," *Otgosloski zhizni*, 19 May 1906, 2; "Chorna sotnia abo-zh 'istynno-russkie' liudi," *Hromads'ka dumka*, 17 May 1906, 1.

⁷⁴ "Sedletskii pogrom," *Zakon i pravda*, 23 September 1906, 2–3; see also *Zakon i pravda*, 25 January 1907, 1; "Svoboda, ravenstvo," *Zakon i pravda*, 29 September 1906, 1.

⁷⁵ "Boikot studentov-politekhnikov," *Kievskii golos*, 20 September 1906, 2; *Kievlianin*, 21 September 1906, 3.

⁷⁶ "Chorna sotnia abo-zh 'istynno-russkie' liudi," *Hromads'ka dumka*, 17 May 1906, 1.

mobilization campaigns also led the antiliberal populists to victory in the municipal дума elections of 1906.⁷⁷ The biggest victory of all for Kiev's antiliberal populists came in February 1907, when city residents elected Platon, the Bishop of Chigirin, the Rector of the Kiev Theological Academy, and a vocal opponent of capitalist modernism, to the imperial parliament.⁷⁸ The first Orthodox bishop elected to the body, Platon was one of only three right-wing delegates elected by Russian cities.⁷⁹ On the night of the election, antiliberal populists marched around the city, lauding Platon's ability to protect the Orthodox residents of "ancient Kiev" from its non-Christian enemies.⁸⁰ Once in the power, the bishop did not disappoint his constituents; even as he lobbied to extend state benefits for unemployed workers, he opposed liberals' attempts to condemn the assassination of Jewish дума delegates by right-wing paramilitary units.⁸¹

Through the end of the old regime, Kiev remained a reliable supplier of right-wing delegates to the imperial parliament and the spiritual home of an East Slavic nationalist movement that called on a strong state to expand the economic and political opportunities available to the borderlands' Orthodox residents, and to limit the abuses of the capitalist elite and the civil rights of Poles and Jews. If some veterans of the antiliberal populist movement of the 1890s and early 1900s had by then begun to identify as "Russian" nationalists, Kiev's antiliberal forces continued to draw on Ukrainian culture as a means of defining themselves against their "foreign exploiters."⁸² As antiliberal populist ideas now intersected with

⁷⁷ For detailed coverage of these elections, see Hillis, *Children of Rus'*, 181–210.

⁷⁸ "Vybir posla vid Kyeva," *Rada*, 7 February 1907, 3; "Akt," DAKO, f. 2, op. 42, d. 300e, l. 98. For biographical information on Platon, see DAKO, f. 2, op. 42, d. 300e, ll. 71–73.

⁷⁹ Aleksei Smirnov, *Kak proshli vybory vo 2-iu gosudarstvennuu dumu* (St. Petersburg: Obshchestvennaia pol'za, 1907), 251.

⁸⁰ "Provody chlena Gosudarstvennoi Dumy ot Kyeva, preosviashchennogo Platona, episkopa Chigirinskogo," *Kievskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti* 7 (1907): 156–68.

⁸¹ *Gosudarstvennaia дума: Stenograficheskie otchety 1907 g.* (St. Petersburg: Gorodskaiia Tipografiia, 1907), 1: 1275, 1374–75; 2: 604–5.

⁸² On self-proclaimed "Russian nationalists," see *Sbornik Kluba russkikh natsionalistov* (Kiev: Kushnerev, 1909); for examples of antiliberal populists' efforts to draw on Ukrainian culture, see Ia. Demchenko, *Pravda ob ukrainofil'stve* (Kiev: I.N. Kushnerev, 1906); and the daily paper *Kiev*, launched in January 1910.

coalescing national movements, the future of inter-ethnic accommodation in Kiev grew ever more uncertain. Already hounded by constant threats of pogroms, Kiev Jews were further marginalized by the notorious Beilis Affair (1911–13), which saw local activists convince the Ministry of Justice to accuse an innocent Jew of ritual murder.⁸³ By the eve of World War I, Kiev's antiliberal populists had severely undermined the imperial social order and expressed their willingness to usurp vital governance tasks from St. Petersburg.⁸⁴

In the last years of the old regime, Kiev was one of the empire's most violent and unstable corners. Yet far from evidence of the city's civic or political underdevelopment, the explosive mass politics that emerged from Kiev testified to its modernity and to its involvement in pan-European political trends. Despite the continued existence of the autocracy, the city had generated a "politics in a new key" that relied on mass mobilization through the press, public spectacles, and electoral agitation. Indeed, as this chapter has argued, official efforts to modernize and better manage the borderlands had unwittingly equipped activists with opportunities as well as tools to forge a new style of politics that would ultimately threaten civic order in the city and challenge the authority of the autocratic state.

From a political vantage point, Kiev was far from a provincial backwater; despite its distance from the centers of power in Moscow and St. Petersburg and its liminal position on the continent, it was a modern metropolis being transformed by the increasingly radical political cultures sweeping the rest of the continent. The case of Kiev serves as a useful reminder that the Russian Empire's race to modernity entailed more than democratization, industrializa-

⁸³ Consult *Delo Beilisa: Stenograficheskie otchet*. 3 vols. (Kiev: Pechatnia S.P. Iakovleva, 1913). On local activists' insistence that a blood ritual had taken place in Kiev, see TsDIAUK, f. 317, op. 1, d. 5482 (tom 1), ll. 15a–15g.

⁸⁴ Hans Rogger's classic work on the right in the Russian Empire ultimately dismissed its political prospects, arguing that "there was still little that could fuse the disparate and scattered elements of the Right into an effective force." This chapter, by contrast, contends that Kiev's antiliberal populists built a powerful and transformative social movement that became much more than the "noisy, powerful irritant" that Rogger describes. See Rogger, *Jewish Policies*, 206, 211.

tion, urbanization, and the rise of civil society. It reveals the dark underbelly of modernity, showing how these processes could stir up new resentments, generate new conflicts, and militate against the dreams of liberal reformers. The rise of mass politics in Kiev foretold the demise of the era of notables and spoke to the desire of tsarist subjects to seize control of their political destinies, but it also revealed the self-destructive and violent potential of political mobilization.

4. Creating Polish Wilno, 1919–1939

Theodore R. Weeks

In the interwar period newly formed (or resurrected, or expanded) Eastern European states were faced with a number of difficult challenges, among them the need to modernize and to nationalize their populations.¹ While modern national movements had been developing here for decades or even generations, it is clear that even among relatively “advanced” nations like the Poles or Czechs, many individuals—especially in rural areas—continued to define themselves primarily by religion or locality rather than as members of a nation. Even in cities, the “nationalization of urban space” was primarily a phenomenon of the post-1848 period.² In interwar Poland, where cities were almost inevitably populated in large part by non-Poles, the perceived need to Polonize urban space was particularly acute. This was even more so the case on the edges of interwar Poland where cities such as Poznań (Posen), Lviv (Lemberg, Lwów), and Vilnius (Vilna, Wilno) were claimed not only by Poles but by national movements in neighboring states.³

¹ For the purpose of this chapter, “Eastern Europe” will refer essentially to the states east of the Elbe created or significantly enlarged by the peace treaties of Paris in 1919. Translations from Polish sources in the text are mine.

² On the nationalization of urban space, see Rausch, *Kultfigur und Nation*; King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans*; and Czaplicka et al., *Composing Urban History*.

³ There is a large and growing literature on nationalizing urban space in East Central Europe. The example of Lemberg/Lwów/L’viv bears many similarities with Wilno/Vilnius. See, for example, Prokopowych, *Habsburg Lemberg*; Mick, *Kriegserfahrungen in einer multiethnischen Stadt*.

Polish cities before 1914 were seldom “modern” as understood from the perspective of Central or Western Europe. With the exception of Warsaw, Łódź, and to some extent Białystok, industrialization had barely begun to make a serious impact on Polish urban centers. To be sure, cities and even small towns were by 1914 connected to the railroad net. Modern conveniences such as gas lighting (and, to a much more limited extent, electricity), sewers, and public transport made their appearance in large Polish urban centers before 1914. Still, the proud but impoverished resurrected Polish Republic of the interwar period lacked capital to modernize the country’s urban centers as a whole and tended to concentrate on the capital. The city we will consider here, Wilno (present-day Vilnius) hardly progressed in an economic or technological sense in the interwar years. Neither the local university nor interwar guidebooks stressed modernity in the sense of technology or scientific breakthroughs. Modernity in interwar Wilno can be seen—if at all—in its exciting literary movements like *Jung Vilne* in Yiddish and *Żagary* in Polish. For Wilno, the past—its role as a bulwark of Catholicism and Polonism, the *Ostra Brama* Madonna, and the city’s association with the Polish national poet Mickiewicz—was far more important than modernity in a traditional sense. The reasons for this emphasis on the past can be debated, but certainly derived in part from a lack of alternatives: Wilno was an economically poor city, far from economic and political resources. While other cities might have been able to use their position “on the border” to economic advantages (for example, Breslau/Wrocław), this was impossible for interwar Wilno where the border with Lithuania was entirely closed (at least for legal commerce) and both political and economic factors precluded a significant level of trade with the neighboring USSR.

Wilno is particularly interesting in view of the city’s very mixed population, its geographical position on the extreme northeastern frontier of the Polish state, and the overt claims on the city by the adjacent Lithuanian state. Obviously, I cannot present a comprehensive view of politics, culture, and national consciousness in Wilno in this period of twenty years in a short chapter.⁴ Rather I

⁴ For a stimulating point of departure on interwar Wilno as a multiethnic city, see Wendland, “Kulturelle, nationale und urbane Identitäten in Wilna.”

describe certain specific examples and techniques by which Poles in Wilno tried to “claim” the city for their own nation in the hope that these examples provide some insight into the history of that city in the interwar period while also contributing to a larger discussion of how “a nation” claims urban space for itself. Unlike most of the cities discussed in this volume, Wilno was neither the country’s capital nor a major economic center. I would argue, however, that the very attempt to nationalize urban space must be considered a significant part of twentieth-century modernization in Eastern Europe. In addition, this is a peculiar kind of “modernity,” but modern national states need not only industrial cities, centers of bureaucracy, and sumptuous monuments to contemporary power. They also require sites of national memory: the past—of a particular and cultivated kind, to be sure—is crucial for the modern would-be nation state. It is this kind of modernizing that one observes in interwar Wilno: not new industry and infrastructure but the development of educational institutions and a rhetoric linking the present-day city with the glories of the Polish national past.

Prelude: World War I in Wilno

At the beginning of 1914, Wilno was a provincial city in the Russian Empire, capital of the so-called Northwest territory (*Severo-zapadnyi krai*), which roughly corresponds to present-day Lithuania and Belarus. The city’s population was approximately 200,000, of which Jews and Poles taken together made up between two-thirds and three-quarters of the total population.⁵ Located on the railroad line from St. Petersburg to Warsaw, Wilno’s population had ap-

⁵ The latest prewar statistics we have are for 1910, which give a total population of 192,746 (cited in Hamm, ed., *The City in Late Imperial Russia*, 3). According to the 1897 census, the city had a total population of 154,532, among whom 40 percent were native speakers of Yiddish, followed by Polish (30.9%), Russian (20.0%), Belarusian (4.2%), and Lithuanian (2.1%), *Pervaia vseobshchaia perepis’ naseleniia Rossiiskoi Imperii*, tom 4: *Vilenskaia guberniia*, tetrad’ 3, tables XIII and XIV (Sankt Peterburg: MVD, 1899). While these figures are open to question they do give some idea of the different nationalities residing in the city.

proximately quadrupled since the mid-nineteenth century.⁶ Entire new sections of the city, including the fashionable broad St. George's Avenue (today's Gedimino) were built in this period. Wilno was the center of administration for the Northwest provinces, housed a significant garrison, and enjoyed a growing economy based on light industry. In short, Wilno was becoming modernized—but as a provincial city in the Russian Empire.⁷

The city's location on the railroad line from St. Petersburg to Warsaw meant that it was immediately affected by the mobilization of troops and battles in the summer of 1914, but the actual front did not reach Wilno until fall of the following year. On the eve of Yom Kippur 1915 (18 September), the Russians withdrew and German troops entered the city. Although the German authorities did not single out any one nationality for mistreatment, local needs were subordinated to the war effort. As a result, by 1916—and even more so in the subsequent years—Wilno's population was hungry, if not starving. To quote a contemporary, Hirszt Abramowicz, who spent the entire war period in Wilno: "The German occupation during World War I oppressed everyone [that is, members of all nationalities] more or less equally."⁸ Although Berlin did at times attempt to woo Polish and Lithuanian patriots, in general this policy was contradictory and in any case at the local level hardly to be seen. Polish landowners were furious over German confiscations of great parts of their harvests, Lithuanians were unhappy that the Germans seemed to take the Poles more seriously (until at least 1917), and Jews mainly attempted to keep their heads down and eke out a living.⁹ As for the German

⁶ Fedor, *Patterns of Urban Growth*, 183–215.

⁷ On economic development in the later nineteenth century, see Jurginis et al., *Vilnius miesto istorija*, 331–40. More broadly on Wilno (Vilna) as a provincial city in the Russian Empire, see Weeks, "Repräsentationen russischer Herrschaft in Vil'na."

⁸ Abramowicz, *Profiles of a Lost World*, 201. This memoir was originally published in Yiddish: *Farshvundene geshtalt: zikhroynes un siluett* (Buenos Aires: Tsentral-farband fun poylishe yidn in argentine, 1958).

⁹ Unfortunately no synthetic treatment of the city during the war years yet exists. Meanwhile, see the documents and readings collected in Manelis et al., *Vilnius miesto istorijos skaitiniai*, 473–565; Manelis et al., *Vilnius miesto istorijos dokumentai*, 313–67; and memoirs such as Stanisław Cywiński, *Kartki z pamiętnika (1914–1920)* (Wilno: Odbitka z Dziennika Wileńskiego, 1931); Petras Kli-

authorities, while they certainly portrayed Wilno as a place of “disorder” that they contrasted with German and “European” tidiness, the period of the German occupation was clearly too short and too full of other, more pressing matters, for the Oberost authorities to make plans for rebuilding or reforming the city.

Traditionally, the chronological boundaries of World War I are clear: August 1914 to 11 November 1918. But in Eastern Europe, the armistice declaration marked the beginning of new armed struggles that would only end in the early 1920s. For the inhabitants of Wilno, the war really only ended with the definitive occupation of the city by Polish troops in October 1920 or, from another point of view, with the official declaration of the city’s incorporation into the Polish Republic a year and a half later. During this extremely difficult period, the city changed hands several times. As soon as the Germans withdrew at the end of 1918, the Red Army occupied the city, which was then captured by the Poles in April 1919. In the context of the ill-advised attempt by the Red Army to spread the revolution to Germany via Poland in 1920, Wilno was once again passed from Polish to communist occupation on 14 July 1920; a month later the city was handed over to the Lithuanians.¹⁰ Hoping to bolster their case with the League of Nations for the city, the Lithuanian authorities hurried to transfer offices and even ministries to Wilno. Their efforts were foiled, however, by the taking of the city by Polish troops led by General Lucjan Żeligowski on 9 October 1920.¹¹

The Polish population of Wilno welcomed the entry of Żeligowski and his troops with enthusiasm. As a contemporary account

mas, *Dienoraštis 1915–1919* (Chicago: AM & M Publications, 1988); Czesław Jankowski, *Z dnia na dzień: Warszawa 1914–1915 Wilno* (Wilno: Wydawnictwo Kazimierza Rutkiego, 1923); and Haikl Lunskey, *Meha-geto ha’vilna’i: tipusim u-tselilim* (Vilna: Agudat ha-sofrim veka-zhurnalistik ha’ivriyim beVilna, 1921).

¹⁰ Weeks, “Vilnius in World War I.”

¹¹ For extremely divergent interpretations of these complicated events (1918–1920), see Šadžius et al., *Vilniaus miesto istorija*, 7–38; Eidintas et al., *Lithuania in European Politics*, 59–85; Wyszczelski, *Wilno 1919–1920*; Łossowski, *Konflikt polsko-litewski*. The best account of the diplomatic and political maneuvering over the city is Senn, *The Great Powers*.

remembered, “All of Polish Wilno went mad with joy.”¹² In order to preserve the appearance of legality, Marshall Józef Piłsudski claimed to have played no role in Żeligowski’s taking of Wilno. Whether or not one wishes to believe that, it seems unlikely that the Polish leader would have been entirely ignorant of his close associate’s plans. In any case, Żeligowski immediately announced that a plebiscite would be held to determine the territory’s fate. In the not-quite year and a half between the taking of the city and the plebiscite (8 January 1922), the territory was administered as a separate entity, Litwa Środkowa (Middle Lithuania).¹³ The plebiscite duly took place in early 1922, was mainly boycotted by non-Poles, and elected a diet that voted overwhelmingly for the incorporation of Middle Lithuania into the Polish Republic. On 6 April 1922, the Warsaw Constituent Assembly (*Sejm Ustawodawczy*) officially accepted the proposal to include Wilno and its surrounding territory into Poland.¹⁴

Wilno as a Center of Polish Learning: Stefan Batory University

Long before Wilno was officially part of the Polish state, efforts were already under way to restore the city’s “proper”—to use these actors’ rhetoric—Polish face. Mere days after news of the armistice,

¹² Ryszard Mienicki, “Wilno w polskim wysiłku zbrojnym,” in *Wilno i ziemia wileńska. Zarys monograficzny* (Wilno: Wydawnictwo Wojewódzkiego Komitetu Regionalnego, 1930), 31–42, 41: “całe Wilno szalało z radości.” A similar view is presented in Wanda Dobaczewska, *Wileńszczyzna i Nowogródzka w latach 1920–1937: Sprawy polityczne i społeczne* (Wilno: Nakładem Dziennika Urzędowego Kuratorium Okr. Szk. Wileńskiego, 1938), 5.

¹³ On the administration of this territory, see Kolarz, *Ustrój Litwy Środkowej*. It should be noted, however, that even a rather superficial glance through archival documents indicates that administrators treated “Middle Lithuania” as part of Poland even before its formal incorporation into the Polish Republic in 1922. See, for example, the files kept at Lietuvos Centrinis Valstybės Archyvas, Vilnius, fondas 19 (Tymczasowa Komisja Rządząca Litwy Środkowej, 1920–1923), f. 20 (Biuro delegata rządu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Wilnie, 1920–1922); f. 21 (Kancelaria cywilna naczelnego dowódcy wojsk Litwy Środkowej, 1920–1921).

¹⁴ Srebrakowski, *Sejm Wileński 1922 roku*, 119.

a first meeting dedicated to the restoration of a Polish university in Wilno was held. The university was of key importance not just as a center of learning and practical training, but even more as an indication of the strength and continuity of Polish culture in the city. After all, the Polish national poet Adam Mickiewicz had studied at the university in Wilno in the early nineteenth century, and the closing of the university after the November Insurrection of 1830/31 was seen as part of the greater tragedy of the Polish nation.¹⁵ Thus resurrecting the university (and the biblical word is often used in memoirs of the time) was crucial for reestablishing Polish Wilno. Significantly, reopening the university was never justified in scientific or economic terms: rather, tradition and history were always stressed. The study of humanities, law, folklore, and art always predominated at the new institution.

After the decision taken on 13 December 1918 to reestablish the university, an enormous amount of practical work had to be carried out under very difficult circumstances. A budget of just over 6,000,000 Polish Marks was set for the period between 1 July and 31 December 1919 to get the university buildings in shape to receive students, recruit professors, and the like. The humanities held a privileged position in the university, probably partly due to the tradition of Mickiewicz, but equally due to financial and practice considerations. According to the first “proto-rektor,” Adam Wrzosek, efforts were made to recruit at least one Lithuanian professor for a chair of Lithuanian linguists, “naturally, [one] not hostile to *polskość*.” Among those considered for the post, if we can believe Wrzosek, were Mikolas Biržiška (later rector of the Lithuanian Vilnius University 1940–1943), despite the fact that he was “exceedingly unpopular among the Polish society of Wilno,” and later nationalist Lithuanian politician Augustinas Voldemaras (though he was seen as “a person hostile toward Poland”).¹⁶ Ultimately, no

¹⁵ There is an enormous literature on the history of the university. See, for example, Baranowski, *Bibliografia Wilna*; for a quick overview, see Kosman, *Uniwersytet Wileński*, and Merkys et al., *Vilniaus universiteto istorija; Vilniaus universiteto istorija 1579–1994*.

¹⁶ A. Wrzosek, “Wskreszenie Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego,” in *Księga pamiątkowa ku uczczeniu 350 rocznicy założenia Uniw. Wileńskiego* (Wilno: Uniwersytet Stefana Bartorego, 1929), vol. 2, 1–32, 21.

chair for Lithuanian language and literature was set up, whether from direct anti-Lithuanian hostility or simply because no suitable candidate could be found, it is difficult to say.¹⁷ Similarly, despite appeals from the Jewish community, no chair for the study of Hebrew—much less Yiddish—would be created at the university.

Officially the university was opened—now bearing the name of its original founder from the sixteenth century, Stefan Batory—by a decree signed by Józef Piłsudski on 28 August 1919 declaring: “By means of my decree the University of Wilno, closed by hostile to us [Poles] force 87 years ago, is once again called back to life [*został powołany do życia*].”¹⁸ Between this August declaration and the official opening of the university some six weeks later there was a frantic rush to get the buildings in shape to receive students, organize the university library, and prepare for the festive opening. This inaugural ceremony began on 10 October with special afternoon masses at the Ostra Brama Madonna, an obvious Polish symbol, thereby connecting up the modern university with its religious origins. This was followed by a festive mass celebrated the next day at the Cathedral, the inauguration ceremony in the university’s Columned Hall (*Sala Kolumnowa*), which involved the head of state (*Naczelny Wódz*, as Piłsudski was called) handing over to the university rector the university insignia, and finally an evening ball hosted by Piłsudski. The leader delivered a long speech for the occasion, and at the signing of the act officially opening the university, the title *Uniwersytet Stefana Batorego* (USB) was used for the first time. As the first rector later recalled, even the Jewish population of the city regarded the opening of the university with interest and sympathy.¹⁹

Writing in the late 1920s, the first rector of the newly resurrected USB, Professor Michał Siedlecki, stressed the university’s efforts

¹⁷ Lithuanian culture did continue in interwar Wilno, despite Polish government suspicions and harassment. For a personal memoir on important figures in the Lithuanian cultural scene in interwar Wilno, see Mackonis, *Senoji vilniečių karta*.

¹⁸ Ibid., 24. For the full text of this decree, see Piłsudski, “Dekret Naczelnego Wodza.” This volume (Feliński, 1992) contains several articles connected with USB and with other schools in Wilno.

¹⁹ Michał Siedlecki, “Wspomnienia z pierwszych dwóch lat organizacji Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego,” in *Księga pamiątkowa*, vol. 2, 60–80.

and—on the whole—successes in maintaining good relations with Wilno society and with the non-Poles resident there. For example, Wilno Jews, he maintained, had “a rather strange idea of Polish scholarship [*nauka*]” due to their experiences under Russian rule and at first were rather reserved toward the university. Soon, however, “they recognize that the existence of an institution of higher learning in Wilno could bring them significant benefits [*znaczna korzyść*],” and even the important Zionist leader Rabbi Isaac Rubinstein sent his daughter to study at the university. Siedlecki even wanted—or so he later wrote—to set up a lectureship for Hebrew, “but I was unable to find an appropriate candidate [to fill the post].” A lectureship was created for Belarusian and, again following the rector’s later recollection, attempts were made to reach out to local Lithuanians.²⁰ But when two Poles, Witold Abramowicz and one Mr. Krzyżanowski, approached Siedlecki in the spring of 1920 with the request that a chair (*katedra*) of Yiddish (*język żydowski*) and another for Lithuanian language be created so that there could be at least one professor of the Jewish nationality and one Lithuanian on the faculty, the rector rejected the appeal out of hand, noting that only scholarly qualifications would be the basis of hiring decisions, not politics. Siedlecki’s stereotyped references to Jews and his rather bizarre story of a cloaked bust of Trotsky in the Museum of Jewish Art probably only reflected generally held Judeophobic prejudices. At the same time, however, it was clear to him and to most Wilno Poles that the university should and would be a bastion of Polish culture.²¹

Toward the end of the first full academic year at USB, the approach of the Red Army forced the evacuation of university personnel and students. Many students joined the volunteers to fight the Bolsheviks with the rector’s explicit blessing. In early July 1920 it became clear that Polish troops would not be able to defend the city and the rector prepared to evacuate faculty and the most valuable moveable property of the university. With five train cars provided on 10 July,

²⁰ For a quite different—and certainly no more objective—view of Polish-Lithuanian relations in Wilno at the time, see Mykolas Biržiška, *Vilniaus Golgotha: Okupuotosios Lietuvos lietuvių ir kančių 1919–1928 metų dienoraštis* (Kaunas: Vilniui vaduoti s-ga, 1930).

²¹ Siedlecki, “Wspomnienia,” 89–92.

Siedlecki left the city, ending up in Poznań where he received a telegram from General Żeligowski with the welcome news that Wilno was back in Polish hands. Within days he was back in the city and was relieved to find that for the most part, the university had not been damaged under Bolshevik or Lithuanian rule. During the period of Litwa Środkowa, the rector complained, the representatives of the League of Nations in Wilno completely failed to understand “the mood [*nastrój*] of the people of Wilno” and made no effort to comprehend the city (and region’s) *polskość*. Perhaps in part due to this frustration, in late 1921 Siedlecki left the city and returned to Cracow.

After the incorporation of Wilno into the Polish Republic, the university was able to operate on a more regular, not to say routine, basis. There were six faculties: “1) the Arts, 2) Theology, 3) Law and Social Sciences, 4) Mathematics and Natural Sciences, 5) Medicine, and 6) the Fine Arts.”²² Among the most pressing issues of the university’s first decade of existence were continual financial problems, finding decent housing for faculty and students, improving the university library, and setting up appropriate clinics and laboratories.²³ Enrollments went up from 547 students (251 of whom were women) in 1919/20 to 3,177 (1,086 women) in 1928/29, a figure roughly equal to that of 1938/39 (3,110).²⁴ Jews always made up a large percentage of students, 19 percent in 1928/29, but falling thereafter to around 13 percent ten years later. Fewer Belarusians studied at USB, never more than 3 percent of the total student body, while Lithuanians were even less numerous, rarely more than 1 percent of the total enrollment. There were, however, both Belarusian and Lithuanian student organizations at the university.²⁵

²² Kubilius, *A Short History*, 132; on the university’s structure, see also Kosman, *Uniwersytet Wileński*, 57–60.

²³ Ryszard Mienicki, “Pierwsze dziesięciolecie Uniwersytetu Stefana Batoryego w Wilnie,” in *Księga pamiątkowa*, vol. 2, 115–58 (note 16).

²⁴ For a very detailed statistical account of students at USB in its first decade, see Kazimierz Karaffa-Korbutt, “Działalność naukowa i pedagogiczna U.S.B. z lat 1919–1929 w świetle zestawień statystycznych,” in *Księga pamiątkowa*, vol. 2, 577–94 (note 16). Figure for 1938/39 from Kosman, *Uniwersytet Wileński*, 62.

²⁵ For a report on the activities of student organizations of all kinds at USB, see *Alma Mater Vilnensis* (every issue contains such a “sprawozdanie”), e.g., zeszyt 6 (1927): 29–34; zeszyt 7 (1928): 70–79.

The university did have a Department of Architecture but, tellingly, it was placed within the faculty of fine arts and closed down (apparently as part of a larger reform in Polish universities) in the academic year 1926/27. Students and professors protested the closing down of this small unit within the university, bewailing the general trend toward placing the study of architecture within technical (engineering) rather than humanities. The matter could use further study, but it appears that the short-lived department of architecture at USB was not revived and did not leave behind much of a mark on the cityscape, even in theoretical plans for urban modernization.²⁶

Reading memoirs of USB students—nearly all written after a more-or-less reluctant emigration from the city—one is struck by the elegiac quality of the memories.²⁷ To be sure, remembering one's youth later in life is perhaps always an exercise in reliving past joys of a vanished time, all the more so when the place of those youthful joys had changed so radically and in a certain sense vanished altogether.²⁸ The presence of non-Poles is often remembered, but almost never in hostile or antagonistic terms. Irena Sławińska mentions that between a quarter and one half of students were Jews (clearly exaggerating a bit), but fails to recall any tensions between them and Christian Poles.²⁹ Just before her departure after the war,

²⁶ On the closure of the Department of Architecture, see *Alma Mater Vilnensis*, zeszyt 6 (1927): 28. Another article published in this issue of *Alma Mater Vilnensis* (pages 1–27) is also interesting as a statement of principle for the humanist-historical study of architecture: Otton Krasnopolski, "Felczerstwo w architekturze: Rzecz z powodu likwidacji wyższych uczelni architektury i rozbudowy średnich szkół budownictwa." On the study of urban planning and architecture in Wilno/Vilnius, see Aleksandravičiūtė, *Vilniaus architektūros mokykla*. Tellingly, the one article dedicated to the interwar period concentrates on Professor Juliusz Kłos, the renowned historian of art and architecture.

²⁷ An exception to this rule, however, is Sukiennicki, *Legenda i rzeczywistość*. Sukiennicki's very valuable work is part memoir and part historical overview and is unique in its analysis (in some ways typical for the Cold War) of the links between USB students and Moscow.

²⁸ See, for example, the memoirs of student life in Kieżuń, *Kultura międzywojennego Wilna*, 35–128. On the study of Polish language and literature at USB, see Dalecka, *Dzieje polonistyki wileńskiej*.

²⁹ Sławińska, "Z życia naukowego akademików," 283–96.

Maria Znamierowska wrote in the context of her ethnographic studies that in her dreams she “heard music and song in Polish, Belarussian, Lithuanian, Yiddish” and remarked that USB had been not just a place of study and research but also one of “rest and contemplation on the fleeting forms of life.”³⁰ Thus both in contemporary accounts and postwar memoirs, USB was a place where diverse national cultures and ethnic groups came together and interacted in a cultured and conflict-free manner. But it must be noted that the fundamental assumption and precondition of this conflict-free interchange was the acceptance of the hegemony of Polish culture at the institution. By taking for granted this Polish hegemony, both contemporaries and memoirists could “allow” other cultures to share the institution—but not to claim it as their own.³¹

The restored Polish university in Wilno functioned as a spiritual and intellectual center for the strengthening and propagating of Polish culture. But students never numbered much over 3,000, never as much as 2 percent of the city’s total population. The physical presence of the university at the “heart” of the city functioned, to be sure, as a reminder of the hegemonic culture in Wilno. To some extent one may also argue that the university helped modernize the city: after all, through their education the students brought Europe-wide ideas and fashions to the provincial city. One student group, apparently led by Henryk Zahorski, visited Paris and described their impressions (arguing, *inter alia*, that the Polish nation was “vastly younger” than the French) in *Alma Mater Vilnensis*.³²

For most residents, however, scholarship and university studies must have been rather far removed from their everyday lives. For

³⁰ Znamierowska-Prüfferowa, *Wilno*, 285.

³¹ Many files from the interwar Uniwersytet Stefana Batorego are housed at Lietuvos Centrinis Valstybinis Archyvas, Vilnius (LCVA), f. 175. Of particular interest are the files on student groups (including Esperantists, Jewish students, Zionists, etc.) in f. 175, ap. 15. Some personal files of USB professors ended up at Lietuvos Valstybės Istorinis Archyvas, Vilnius (LVIA), whose collections generally concentrate on the period before 1914. See, e.g., LVIA, f. 1135, ap. 12, personal archive of architect and art historian Julius Kłos (1881–1933); f. 1135, ap. 13, personal archive of historian Stanisław Kościółkowski (1881–1960); f. 1135, ap. 16, law professor Alfons Parczewski (1849–1933).

³² *Alma Mater Vilnensis* 4 (1926): 26–35.

the less educated and less affluent majority, city authorities had to take quite different measures to make the city's face, so to speak, more Polish. For one thing, streets were renamed in appropriate Polish fashion. Suvorovskaia became Św. Anny, Gubernatorskaia was renamed Żeligowskiego, St. George became Mickiewicz. Streets named after distant points in the Russian Empire generally received new names referring to local or at least Polish places: Kavkazskaia, Vladimirskaia, Orenburgskaia streets were renamed Góra Bouffałowa, Dynaburska, and Śmigłego-Rydza, respectively. Some street names associated with Russian Orthodoxy (Blagoveshchenskaia, Preobrazhenskaia) received more Catholic names (Dominikańska, Ludwisarska). But some changes are rather more difficult to explain: why change Elektrychnaia to Rybaki or Automobilnaia to Szara? And most street names did not change, except for the accent: Niemiecka, Żydowska, Mińska, Fabryczna, Dobra, and Karaimska remained unchanged, though of course now signs would be in Latin letters instead of Cyrillic. In any case, it seems likely that inhabitants continued to use the old names for streets (as in Ilya Ilf and Evgeny Petrov's satire *The Twelve Chairs* for streets named in Russia after the Revolution) for some time. Jews for the most part would have used the Yiddish names, for example Dayshegos (ul. Niemiecka), and one imagines that they continued to speak of Glezer and Yatkever (Jatkowa) even when the "official" names of these streets in the Jewish quarter had been changed to Gaona and Juljana Klaczki.³³

Monumentalizing Mickiewicz

Changing street names is one means of "impressing the national" onto a cityscape. Another way to mark and memorialize a city's (national) past is through public art, in particular monuments. Only a few such works of public memorial art were constructed in Wilno

³³ For a very helpful list of Wilno street names "before" (under the Russians) and "after" 1920, see the map attached to Juliusz Kłos, *Wilno: Przewodnik krajoznawczy*, 3rd ed. (Wilno: Wydawnictwo Oddziału polskiego towarzystwa turystyczno-krajoznawczego, 1937).

in the interwar period. One of these was a small memorial to the Polish writer Eliza Orzeszkowa (who spent most of her life in nearby Grodno, though she had many close ties to Wilno), set up on the square now dominated by a monument to Vincas Kudirka (who wrote the words to the Lithuanian national anthem). Aside from this, surprisingly little was done to adorn the cityscape with new monuments or public art, most likely because of the lack of finances—as usual, the Polish government preferred to expend its main efforts at modernization on Warsaw. Plans to construct an enormous (over twenty meters high) monument to the city’s most famous son, Adam Mickiewicz, caused a great deal of public debate resulting in two large models—but no final monument. But the controversies over the Mickiewicz monument are in themselves indicative of the difficulties of “properly” monumentalizing national heroes.

There is some irony in the fact that when Mickiewicz monuments were erected in Cracow (1898), Warsaw (1898), and Lwów (1904), none was constructed in the city most linked with the artist’s life and work.³⁴ Of course the reason for this is not hard to understand: Mickiewicz symbolized Polish culture and while such a monument could be allowed—albeit grudgingly—even in Russian-occupied Warsaw, it would send an unacceptable message in Wilno, that is it would mark the city as culturally Polish. After all, Mickiewicz has been a student in the city and had been arrested in connection with an anti-Russian conspiracy. The Russian authorities exiled him from his native city and Mickiewicz was never to return home. Thus a monument to this “rebel” could hardly be allowed as long as the Russians ruled over the region. Nonetheless, there were again efforts—associated in particular with the journalist Czesław Jankowski—to erect a monument, and several thousand rubles had been collected for this purpose before the outbreak of World War I.³⁵

Once the city was firmly (though not yet officially) in Polish hands after October 1920, efforts were renewed to properly remem-

³⁴ On the Mickiewicz monuments in Cracow and Warsaw (respectively), see Dabrowski, *Commemorations and the Shaping*, 133–56; and Weeks, “A City of Three Nations.”

³⁵ Poklewski, “Projekty pomnika Mickiewicza.”

ber Mickiewicz in the town of his youth. The Committee for the Construction of a Monument to Adam Mickiewicz was set up in 1921, and a model for the future monument by sculptor Zbigniew Pronaszko was completed the following year.³⁶ Unfortunately, the cubist style of the proposed monument (and model) was not to the liking of most Wilno Poles. As a well-known art historian at USB and Wilno enthusiast, Juljusz Kłos noted in a contemporary guidebook, “twelve meters high . . . in cubist forms [the model] called forth an instinctive protest in most viewers.”³⁷

While Pronaszko’s model continued to stand, as far as I can tell, throughout the 1930s, its modernist form made it unacceptable to sponsors of such a monument. Clearly the local artistic tastes in Wilno were far from modern. Already in 1925 a new competition for the Mickiewicz monument was announced. The competition was limited to Polish artists, regardless of their place of residence. The jury judging the entries (there were sixty-eight in all) was headed by General Żeligowski and included a number of dignitaries, from a banker to professors of art and architecture to a Poznań literary figure. The majority of the jury were not from Wilno but represented all parts of Poland, emphasizing the national importance of the future monument. It would appear that the general taste of this group was very conservative; all of the finalist projects were representational and heroic in tone. Ironically, the most “modern” of the Mickiewicz monuments remained the unfinished model by Pronaszko that had been erected initially. After a great deal of discussion and negotiation that lasted for years, the project of Henryk Kuna was accepted, by an overwhelming number of votes, in 1932. The monument was to be placed in the center of the city, at the intersection of Wileńska and Mickiewicza in the middle of the latter avenue and was, like Pronaszko’s model, to tower above the city, the five-meter tall statue of the bard placed atop a base (decorated with bas relief motifs from Mickiewicz’s works) over twice as high.³⁸

³⁶ Poklewski, “Organizacje artystyczne,” 173–74.

³⁷ Kłos, *Wilno. Przewodnik krajoznawczy*, 262. For an image of the model which was apparently located at the foot of Castle Hill (on the Wilia/Neris side), see Poklewski, “Organizacje artystyczne,” 176.

³⁸ Poklewski, “Projekty pomnika Mickiewicza,” 262–69; Steffen, “Ein ‘jüdisches Denkmal’ in Wilna?”

Unfortunately, Kuna's monument was to prove just as unacceptable to large segments of Wilno Polish society as Pronaszko's had been. The location, structure, and style of the monument were criticized, in particular in press polemics encouraged by the conservative Wilno daily, *Ślowo*.³⁹ Here a new factor came into play: Kuna's Jewish origins. Although Kuna had been born into an Orthodox Jewish family, he had converted to Catholicism and was a well-known Polish artist. The polemics over whether a Polish patriot of Jewish origins should be allowed to memorialize the Polish national poet—himself of mixed and “questionable” origins—indicated that a form of racial anti-Semitism had entered Polish public discourse by the 1930s. Moreover, we should not discount entire petty factors such as personal rivalries, the cynical use of anti-Semitism to sell newspapers, and actual misgivings over the monument's intrinsic merits. In any case, in the face of press polemics the Wilno town council proved reluctant to support the project and the monument remained only a wooden model when World War II broke out.⁴⁰ The difficulties of remembering and memorializing Mickiewicz in Wilno give us some insight into the complications of public and national commemoration in interwar Poland.

Literary Tourism as Nationalizing Tool: Wilno Polish Guidebooks

Putting up a monument is a complicated procedure involving committees, state and city authorities, large sums of money, and in the twentieth century often public polemics. Conversely, tourism is a much more personal activity, though closely linked with industrial

³⁹ On this newspaper and its views (though concentrating on a somewhat earlier period), see Osica, *Politycy anachronizmu*. On its editor, a major political and literary figure of Wilno and of his time, see Jaruzelski, *Stanisław Cat-Mackiewicz*.

⁴⁰ Poklewski claims, based on press accounts, that the statue of Mickiewicz was actually cast in bronze in April 1939 but remained in the workshop and was destroyed during World War II (“Projekty pomnika Mickiewicz,” 265). Steffen, who does not use Poklewski's article (but does use archives in Vilnius), makes no mention of the casting of the statue.

modernization. Travel as a leisure activity became a mass phenomenon only in the mid-nineteenth century (Thomas Cook's famous outings, including to visit the Crystal Palace Exhibition in London) and was just beginning to appear in East Central Europe in the early twentieth century.⁴¹ A proper tourist needed, of course, a guide—or at least a guidebook (the Polish *przewodnik* can serve for either meaning). There had been Polish guidebooks to Wilno (or guidebooks to Polish Wilno?) before 1914. Some of these were expanded and many more new guidebooks appeared in the interwar years.⁴² These books adopted various strategies to present Polish Wilno, in part simply by their focus on Catholic and Polish sights, but also by portraying non-Polish elements in the cityscape as somehow foreign, exotic, or even unnatural (the last mainly in the case of Orthodox and Russian elements introduced in the later nineteenth century).⁴³ In many cases the guidebooks presented much more than a mere listing of “sights” or practical information; they included a significant amount of historical, artistic, and even geographical information about Wilno and its surroundings. Guidebooks helped Polonize Wilno in at least three ways: first, by presenting the city as naturally forming part of Poland and Polish history; second, by noting and emphasizing the predominant position of Polish culture and the Roman Catholic faith in the city; and finally, by encouraging Poles from outside Wilno to know (and love) the city as part of their shared cultural and national heritage, whether they hailed from Mazovia, Great Poland, or Galicia.

Perhaps the most popular of these guidebooks was that penned by Władysław Zahorski, first appearing in 1910 and going through

⁴¹ For pioneering essays on tourism in this region, see Koenker et al., *Turizm*. Unfortunately, there are no specifically Polish case studies among the pre-World War II essays here.

⁴² Among pre-1914 guidebooks, see A.H. Kirkor, *Przewodnik Historyczny po Wilnie i jego okolicach*, 2nd ed. (Wilno: Józef Zawadzki, 1880); Władysław Zahorski, *Przewodnik po Wilnie* (Wilno: Józef Zawadzki, 1910); Wacław Gizbert-Studnicki, *Wilno: Przewodnik ilustrowany po mieście i okolicach z planem miasta* (Wilno: Nakładem Tow. Miłośników Wilna, 1910); and Ludwik Życka, *Wilno* (Warszawa-Kraców: Gebethner i spółka, 1912).

⁴³ I have briefly discussed the portrayal of Wilno in prerevolutionary Russian guidebooks in Weeks, “Repräsentationen russischer Herrschaft in Vil’na.”

a number of editions well into the 1930s. Zahorski also published a number of pamphlets on specific sights such as the churches of St. Ann and St. Nicholas. Born in 1858 near Wilno, Zahorski spent his youth in the Russian interior to which his father was exiled after 1863. He attended Moscow University and graduated in 1883 with a medical degree, returning to Wilno in 1893.⁴⁴

Zahorski was not a professional historian but an enthusiast of the city, which may explain the popularity of his guidebook. The guidebooks, in their various editions, begin with a short outline of the city's history, then plunge into the city's streets, beginning with Ulica Ostrobramska and Ulica Zamkowa, that is from the city's Catholic Madonna down to the foot of Castle Hill. As one proceeds, specific houses are identified, usually in connection with their Polish past. Because of the guidebook's organization by streets, then by churches and cemeteries, one almost loses sight of non-Poles and non-Catholics. This is not to say that Zahorski leaves out, for example, Jewish Wilno: under Ulica Szklana he mentions that with this street the so-called Black City (*Czarne Miasto*), or Jewish quarter, begins.⁴⁵ The 1935 edition even includes a short entry *Dzielnica żydowska* describing this quarter as including Szklana, Kłaczki, Żydowska, Gaona, and Szwarcowego streets and mentioning the Great Synagogue.⁴⁶ At the same time, Zahorski's account of Ulica Niemiecka (today's Vokiečių), a street described by Czesław Miłosz as "exclusively Jewish" at this time, does not mention Jews at all.⁴⁷ For Zahorski, it would seem, the Jewish residents of Wilno were a passing and not particularly interesting part of the eternal and Polish city.

Another guidebook, or more properly a kind of mixture of city history and guidebook, by Jerzy Remer, took a different approach. Rather than inviting the reader to wander through the city's streets, identifying specific houses and other sights with the Polish past, Remer divided his book into topics related to the city and its region.

⁴⁴ For a short biography of the author, see Władysław Zahorski, *Przewodnik po Wilnie*, 5th ed. (Wilno: Józef Zawadzki, 1935), III–V.

⁴⁵ Zahorski, *Przewodnik* (1910), 53.

⁴⁶ Zahorski, *Przewodnik* (1935), 75–77.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 73–75. Miłosz, *Zaczynając*, 24: "Nemiecka była ulicą wyłącznie żydowską . . ."

Indeed, the city as such only begins to dominate after some thirty-odd pages on its natural surroundings and the peasant population (where it seems likely that the “*chłop litewski*” [Lithuanian peasant] pictured on page 11 is meant as a local variety of Pole). Proceeding chronologically, Remer dedicates an entire chapter to the Ostra Brama Madonna, speaking lyrically of the generations who have prayed before her and concluding: “But the most expressive documents of the miraculous power of the Mother of Mercy of Ostra Brama are the testimony plaques [*wota*], innumerable links of the enormous chain of human joy and pain.”⁴⁸ While Poles are not mentioned specifically, Remer’s readers would have certainly connected—at least in part—this “joy and suffering” with the past of a Polish-Catholic city under foreign domination.

In a chapter titled “Along Streets and Alleys” (“*Ulicami, zaułkami*”), Remer advises the visitor to stroll aimlessly and without plan through Wilno. In particular he emphasizes the city’s “Latin quarter” (his phrase) around the university and points out the various places connected with Mickiewicz’s life and works. Passing from the university district toward the Rossa Cemetery, Remer does not fail to note the “Black City” of the Jewish quarter. But, as for Zahorski, for Remer this quarter is only a secondary sight along one’s way to the more important cemetery where the remains of various famous Poles are interred. Among those buried in Rossa, Remer duly remarks, are the Lithuanian painter “Czurlanis” (Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis) and thinker “Basanowicz” (Jonas Basanavičius)—but the casual reader would hardly notice these individuals’ nationality.⁴⁹ In particular Remer’s chapters on the nineteenth-century city (“*Ateny Polskie*,” “*Symbol braterstwa i heroizmu*”) portray the city in exclusively Polish terms, as part of the Polish nation and suffering for the Polish cause. In a similar way, the subsequent two chapters (“*Wyzwolenie*,” “*Reduta Rzeczypospolitej*”) tell of the Bolshevik hordes threatening the city and of its eventual redemption by Piłsudski and Żeligowski, but discordant elements such as the pogrom of April 1919 are not mentioned. The city’s past and present fate, Remer’s narrative emphasizes, is inex-

⁴⁸ Jerzy Remer, *Wilno* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Polskie, 1934), 58.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 82–86.

trically connected with the larger fate of Poland. Whether or not the population of the city is of mixed nationality is thus in a sense unimportant: the city itself certainly belongs to the Polish past and future.

One final guidebook that was published in three editions in the 1930s was that of Professor Juljusz Kłos of USB. Kłos was an architect and art critic, a major figure in interwar Wilno. The author's friend, the well-known photographer Jan Bułhak, called Kłos's work a "guidebook to human souls" (*przewodnik po duszach ludzkich*). Kłos died suddenly in 1933 in his early fifties and the final edition of the guidebook (1937) was published after his death. Possibly due to his training as an architect, Kłos dedicates considerable space to the topography and architectural past of the city. But perhaps the most remarkable feature of his guidebook is its enthusiasm, an enthusiasm the author attributes to the city itself, as exemplified by Mickiewicz's "*Oda do Młodości*" (Ode to Youth). Kłos explicitly states that this enthusiasm will certainly penetrate the soul of any sensitive visitor "not only every Pole, but even foreigners coming from distant lands."⁵⁰ Like Remer, Kłos describes Wilno's past and present as part of a larger Polish narrative involving oppression, resistance, and eventually triumph to freedom. Speaking of the city's history from the time of the hated "hangman" M.N. Murav'ev to the city's redemption in the early 1920s, Kłos gives the impression that the city was populated exclusively by Poles; no other nationality is mentioned except obliquely (i.e., if 65% of the population voted on 8 January 1922 for Poland, who were the others?).⁵¹

Kłos's guidebook does dedicate a bit more space to the Jewish quarter, here defining it as the triangular area between three streets: Wielka, Niemiecka, and Dominikańska. Unlike the other two authors discussed here, Kłos also describes the main synagogue with real interest. As for the inhabitants of the quarter themselves, only one is mentioned: the critic and art historian Juljan Klaczko, "a friend of Słowacki's," who was born here but later converted to Christianity and was a convinced Polish patriot. As for the rest,

⁵⁰ Kłos, *Wilno* (1937), 3.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 28–44.

Kłos remarks on the exotic and “original” aspects of the Jewish quarter but goes on: “This [positive] impression is unfortunately weakened by the typically eastern slovenliness (*niechlujstwo*) of the inhabitants of this unhygienic (*antyhygieniczna*) quarter, and its unbearable stench (*zaduch*) makes it impossible for a cultured European, in particular on hot summer days, to visit these alleyways.”⁵² Some individuals of Jewish birth, like Klaczko, could leave behind the “eastern” ways of their people and become “cultured Europeans.” But in general Jews were an exotic and backward element in, but not properly “of,” or constituting the true (Polish) Wilno. It may seem ironic that Jews, often associated with modernity, were associated by Kłos with backwardness, even an Asiatic exoticism, in Wilno. In fact, Kłos was merely following and expanding on a theme found in earlier Russian guidebooks and present in German guidebooks of the city written during World War I. After all, when Wilno Jews “modernized,” they looked very much like their Polish neighbors and became rather less interesting from a tourist point of view.

These guidebooks make abundantly clear that Wilno was interesting more for its past than for its present or future. Indeed, the more modern, late nineteenth- and twentieth-century parts of town are either left out entirely or barely touched on. To be sure, guidebooks as a genre probably tend to privilege past glories over present everyday life, but this tendency is even more pronounced than usual in the representation here of interwar Wilno. If there had been extensive building here—as in Kaunas or other capitals—these new modern structures would no doubt have been included. In actuality, the stagnant economy and hardly dynamic population growth (the city’s population was nearly the same in 1910 and 1931) did not lend themselves to interesting guidebook copy.⁵³

⁵² Ibid., 196.

⁵³ The city’s population in 1910 was 192,746 (Hamm, *The City in Late Imperial Russia*, 3) and in 1931 (the only census carried out in interwar Wilno)—195,071. It seems doubtful that the population was much over 200,000 at the outbreak of World War II.

Polish Literary and Artistic Life in Interwar Wilno

Wilno may have been a poor provincial town in the 1920s and 1930s, but its literary and artistic life was first class. To start with, there was a rich and thriving periodical press both in Polish and in other languages. In 1937, according to one reliable source, over one hundred newspapers and periodicals appeared, of which seventy-four were in the Polish language, twelve in Belarusian, nine in Lithuanian, three in Russian, and sixteen in Yiddish or Hebrew (the Polish *żydowskie* is ambiguous, but no doubt the great majority of these were in Yiddish).⁵⁴ Although most of these publications were, no doubt, short, of uninspiring literary quality, and ephemeral, the very fact that Wilno had such a rich press testifies to a certain degree of modernity. Newspapers had to contend with censorship, fickle readers, and financial difficulties, but when one closed down, another usually opened to take its place. An illustrated article in *National Geographic Magazine* from 1938 shows a smiling newspaper seller with dozens of offerings in a variety of languages (though predominantly in Polish).⁵⁵ Journalists like Czesław Jankowski, Józef Cat-Mackiewicz, and Jan Konrad Obst—all of the conservative camp—were prominent public figures who among other things participated (not always in a positive way) in the debates surrounding the Mickiewicz monument.⁵⁶

If the most prominent journalists in interwar Polish Wilno were conservatives, writers and artists tended to be liberal or even radical in their political views. As with so many other examples of Polish culture in the interwar, poets and writers in Wilno tended to be associated with the university. From 1922, students at USB published an annual titled *Alma Mater Vilnensis*, which included historical studies, memoirs, notes on current student groups, but also poetry.⁵⁷ Indeed,

⁵⁴ Venclova, *Wilno*, 59; see also the rather grandly titled “Dzieje polskiej prasy politycznej na ziemiach b. W.Ks. Litewskiego w latach 1905–1937,” in Dobaczewska, *Wileńszczyzna*, 31–37.

⁵⁵ “Wilno, Stepchild of the Polish Frontier,” *National Geographic* 74, no. 6 (1938): 779.

⁵⁶ On these important journalists and public figures, see Fedorowicz, *W służbie ziemi ojczystej*; Narkowicz, *Jan Konrad Obst*; Jaruzelski, *Mackiewicz i konserwatyści*.

⁵⁷ *Alma Mater Vilnensis*, as far as I have been able to ascertain, was published from 1922 to 1935 (zeszyt 12).

the best known writers to come out of interwar Wilno (their fame derives for the most part from the postwar period) met as students at USB. The most famous of these was Czesław Miłosz,⁵⁸ but also of key importance for Polish literature was the literary group Żagary, which he founded with his friend Teodor Bujnicki in 1931.⁵⁹ Poets, writers, and other literary-minded people gathered from February 1927 to June 1939 at “Literary Wednesdays” to discuss recent poetic and literary works, but also to listen to lectures on historical, theatrical, artistic, or philosophical themes.⁶⁰ Though these writers were to some extent aware of Yiddish, Lithuanian, even Belarusian literary colleagues within the city, on the whole their circle concentrated on the Polish language (which is not to say that they were hostile to non-Polish culture).⁶¹ Still, in retrospect we can see that these writers made a significant contribution to Polish culture, even though before 1939 they remained known in a fairly narrow circle.⁶²

Artistic life, because of its public aspect, figured prominently in the creation of Polish Wilno in the interwar. The most celebrated artist in Wilno during this period was no doubt Ferdynand Ruszczyc, probably best known for his landscape paintings.⁶³ Ruszczyc was born at his family’s estate, Bohdanów, near Wilno,

⁵⁸ On Miłosz in his Wilno literary period see Bujnicki, “Miłosz w wileńskim środowisku literackim.” Miłosz writes about these years (and his childhood) in *Rodzinna Europa* (1959), translated into English as *Native Realm*.

⁵⁹ Lam, “Środowisko ‘Żagarów.’” In general on this important group, see Bereś, *Ostatnia wileńska plejada*.

⁶⁰ Bujnicki, *Szkice wileńskie*, esp. 141–46 and 187–202, “Tradycje romantyczne na wileńskie ‘Środa literackich’” and “Kulturotwórcza rola kwartalnika ‘Środy Literackie’ (1935–1937).” For more detail on the “Literary Wednesdays,” see Hernik-Spalińska, *Wileńskie środy literackie*.

⁶¹ Certainly more work is needed on possible influences between Polish- and other-language writing in interwar Wilno. This topic is only slightly touched on in the otherwise very interesting essays in Bujnicki et al., *Życie literackie i literatura*; Bujnicki et al., *Poezja i poeci w Wilnie*; and Bujnicki et al., *Wilno literackie*.

⁶² A more public form of the literary arts is theater, and Polish theater was very active in Wilno. Unfortunately, I am unable to do this important topic justice here. Meanwhile, see the entire issue on Wilno theater in *Pamiętnik Teatralny* 35, nos. 2–3 (1986).

⁶³ For an overview of his life and work (including reproductions of paintings, drawings, even postage stamps designed by him), see Krzysztofowicz-Kozakowska et al., eds., *Ferdynand Ruszczyc*.

but he came to live permanently in the city only after World War I, having received his artistic education at the Academy of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg in the 1890s, where he also started his artistic career. In 1919 Ruszczyc, by then already an accomplished artist, served on the “Committee to Rebuild Wilno University” (*Komitet Odbudowy Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego*), and he became the first dean of the Department (*wydział*) of Fine Arts.⁶⁴ Besides his work in teaching and administration, Ruszczyc designed the emblem (*herb*) of USB, the university seal, as well as the rector’s chain and scepter. His work was not limited to the university: Ruszczyc also designed stamps for Litwa Środkowa, ration cards for the Wilno magistrate, and ceremonial keys to the city.⁶⁵

Although he became a permanent resident late in life, Ruszczyc turned into an almost unavoidable presence in Wilno. Besides his designs for the city magistrate and university, he was also active in theater design and organized an exhibit of regional art in Wilno in 1928.⁶⁶ Ruszczyc’s political sympathies lay with the right; his diary portrays Lithuanians and especially Jews in a negative light, accusing Jews of working to discredit Poland on the international stage. In addition to the sympathies expressed in his diary toward the anti-Semitic *Endecja*, Ruszczyc also designed the gravestone of the USB (Polish) student who was killed in clashes between nationalist Poles and Jewish students there in 1931.⁶⁷ After a stroke in October 1932, Ruszczyc retired from public life and died on his family’s estate near Wilno in 1936.

An interesting witness to the Polish cultural sphere in Wilno was art historian Stanisław Lorentz. Unlike Ruszczyc, Lorentz had no close connections to Wilno or the region, having only passed

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 33–35; Ruszczyc, “Działalność artystyczna”; Poklewski, “Wydział Sztuk Pięknych Uniwersytetu.”

⁶⁵ Jerzy Remer, “W służbie sztuki: U źródeł twórczości Ferdynanda Ruszczyca,” *Alma Mater Vilnensis*, zeszyt 5–6 (1927): 31–49.

⁶⁶ Poklewski, “Civis Vilnensis.”

⁶⁷ Ferdynand Ruszczyc, *Dziennik: Część druga. W Wilnie (1919–1932)*, ed. Edward Ruszczyc (Warszawa: Secesja 2004), 604 (mention of November 1931 clashes between Polish and Jewish students). The gravestone designed by Ruszczyc for the student Stanisław Waclawski specifically mentions his cause of death as having been “stoned by the Jews” (photo # 130, after p. 656).

through the city twice briefly as a child. In the late 1920s, however, he was offered employment—through Jerzy Remer—as *konserwator* for the Wilno-Nowogródek region. This state position involved documenting and preserving works of important artistic and architectural merit. In his memoirs of this period, Lorentz recalls arriving in the city in 1929 and making the rounds of Wilno's cultural elite, including Ruszczyc, Professor Kłos, and archivists Waław Gizbert-Studnicki and Michał Brensztejn.⁶⁸ Among Lorentz's tasks were to oversee conservation work at Troki (Trakai), on the Upper Castle in Wilno, and of places associated with Mickiewicz (in Nowogródek and elsewhere); he was also instrumental in the opening of a Museum of Contemporary Art in the city in 1931.⁶⁹ Lorentz moreover mentions meetings of the Union of Professional Literateurs in Wilno (*Związek Zawodowy Literatów w Wilnie*), which met appropriately within the former Basilian Monastery where Mickiewicz had been jailed and the *Szopka Akademicka* of 1931, an annual event at USB during which skits, poetry, and humorous texts were presented.⁷⁰ Lorentz's stay in Wilno was not long; having secured a position as vice-director of the National Museum (*Muzeum Narodowe*) in Warsaw, he departed for the capital city in 1935.

Interwar Wilno: How Polish Was It? How Modern?

Ultimately, Wilno remained a city of many ethnicities and cultures throughout the interwar period and even beyond. In the only full-scale census taken there during these two decades (in 1931), Poles made up only 66 percent of the city's population, with 28 percent Jews, 4 percent Russians, and less than 1 percent Lithuanians.⁷¹ Jewish Wilno remained dynamic, though increasing numbers of Wilno Jews spoke—even as a first language—Polish by 1939.

⁶⁸ Lorentz, *Album wileńskie*, 13–25.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 38–39, 60–70, 93.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 76–91. On this annual *szopki*, including images of the satirical effigies of professors and students, see Pikiel, "W szopkowym zwierciadle."

⁷¹ Figures based on 1931 census cited in *Rocznik statystyczny Wilna 1937* (Wilno: Skład główny w centralnym biurze statystycznym m. Wilna, 1939), 9.

Making the city “Polish” did not mean eliminating all non-Polish culture there. Wilno would remain a “Polish” city even with a thriving Yiddish press, some schools in Lithuanian, and a few prominent Orthodox churches (which interestingly were not destroyed in the interwar)—as long as these languages and religions did not challenge the Polish cultural hegemony over the city. Indeed, the presence of diverse cultures and languages within the Polish city could be seen as a positive feature, both as an exotic curiosity (as in the descriptions of the Jewish quarter in Polish guidebooks) and as evidence of the fundamental benevolence and toleration of the Poles.

Did this mean that Wilno Poles “shared” the city with other cultures? I think not. Because Jewish culture existed so to speak on a different track from and parallel to Polish culture, it was viewed as more of a curiosity than a challenge. But Lithuanian patriots—as Mykolas Biržiška and others found out—would not be tolerated in the city as long as they claimed it as their own. For Lithuanians, Wilno (Vilnius to them) was vitally important: the city was specifically named as the official capital of the Lithuanian state in all interwar constitutions. For Poles in Wilno, conversely, Lithuania was only geographically near; in practical terms—and because of the Poles’ lack of interest—Kaunas was much farther than Paris, London, or even Moscow. Perhaps this general lack of interest in Lithuanian culture is an indication of the successful Polonization of Wilno in this period. If so, it is just one more indication of the insular and backward- (or inward-) looking nature of Wilno’s “peculiar modernization” in the 1920s and 1930s.

As for physical modernity, the face of Wilno changed little—and seldom for the better—in the two-decade interwar period. While Wilno of 1939 had more cinemas and its own radio station, the cityscape was basically unchanged. One could speak of modernity of a sort among the intelligentsia but, as the example of Czesław Miłosz shows, the most ambitious of these were generally only too happy to leave the city for Warsaw. Lacking significant industry and wedged between hostile countries, Wilno was an outpost of Polishness—but hardly a model of modernity. Only after major cataclysms, an almost total emptying of the city’s population

by violence or deportation, and a complete change in political hegemony, would the city begin to present itself as modern—but now as the economically and culturally vibrant capital of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic.⁷²

⁷² On the post-1939 period, see Weeks, “A Multi-Ethnic City in Transition.” For (Soviet Lithuanian) Vilnius as an example of socialist modernity, see Jurginis et al., *Vilnius*.

5. Modern Moscow: Russia's Metropolis and the State from Tsarism to Stalinism

Jan C. Behrends

On 2 February 1931, Joseph Stalin gave a speech to the assembled managers of socialist industry in Moscow. For the third year of the first five-year plan, the Bolshevik leader demanded an ever higher increase in production. But he also talked more generally about Russia's path to modernity. Stalin warned his audience "not to slacken the tempo." Otherwise the "old Russia" would return, "who was beaten because of her backwardness." To Stalin, the way forward was clear: "That is why we must no longer lag behind... We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do it, or we shall go under."¹ In his speech, the Soviet leader criticized the irrational and chaotic ways of Western capitalism. Still, he deemed it necessary to beat the West at its own game. To Stalin, modernization at breakneck speed was a precondition for the survival of the Soviet state in a world he perceived as hostile. In the course of the second five-year plan, beginning in 1932, Moscow became one of the showcases of Soviet modernity. Stalin and his entourage launched a campaign to "reconstruct" the Russian metropolis. The pre-1917 Moscow was explicitly chosen as the enemy; the aim to

¹ Joseph V. Stalin, "The Tasks of Business Executives: Speech Delivered at the First All-Union Conference of Leading Personnel of Socialist Industry," 4 February 1931, in his *Works*, vol. 13, July 1930–January 1934 (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1954), 31–44, 41.

overcome its backwardness and “barbarism” came to justify the excesses of the Stalinist transformation.

In retrospect, Stalin’s opposition between pre-revolutionary and Soviet Moscow seems less significant than the Bolsheviks claimed. As a matter of fact, the basic problems Moscow faced between 1890 and 1940—and in many ways also after the World War II until the present time—remained: the constant influx of peasants and the rapid expansion of the city, the power struggle between state and municipality, the shifting attitudes toward Western concepts of urban development, and the burden of being the symbol of Russian statehood and modernity. These factors remained largely unchanged under different regimes: they persisted throughout the times of revolution, terror, and urban catastrophe witnessed by the Russian metropolis.

Tsarist Moscow: Russian Urbanity as Moral Scandal

After the conflagration of 1812, the city of Moscow quickly recovered from the destruction brought upon it by war and invasion. Moscow began to symbolize Russia’s triumph over the intruder. Still, politically the city continued to play second fiddle to St. Petersburg, which had become the empire’s capital in 1712. Moscow nevertheless changed substantially in the course of the nineteenth century. From a traditional seat of the Russian nobility, it was transformed to a center of trade and industry, where the merchant elite became more influential than the gentry.² This change went hand in hand with Moscow’s expansion, a process that was accelerated by Alexander II’s reforms: the emancipation of the serfs helped trigger mass migration to the cities. In the late nineteenth century Moscow became a boomtown. During the decade before World War I the city featured one of the highest urban growth rates and became the world’s tenth biggest city. Situated in the central plains of Russia, its growth was not restricted by geographical boundaries. The city itself was characterized by an enormous expanse. Although densely settled in the center, it had no definite boundaries in any direction.

² On the city’s social development, see Bradley, *Muzhik*; on local politics, see Thurston, *Liberal City*; Rozental’, *Moskva na pereput’e*; for a general analysis of Russian cities under tsarism, see Mironov, *Sotsial’naia istoriia*, 282–359.

Rather, the city melted into the Russian countryside, and there was a large zone of transition between the urban areas and the rural surroundings. To a large degree industrialization and population growth took place in these outskirts. Geographical expansion meant social change: the fastest growing *soslovie* (estate) in the city were the peasants. They came to Moscow from central Russia; in many ways the slow growth of other urban areas fostered the concentration of Russia's problems in Moscow.³ This expansion exacerbated social tensions. On top of that, urbanization, migration, and modernization exposed the weak points of the political order.

The writer Lev Tolstoy was one of the first to describe and scandalize the conditions of modern Moscow.⁴ Tolstoy moved to Moscow from his country estate in 1881. His arrival prompted him to reflect on the changes he observed in Russian urbanity; the place he remembered from his childhood had disappeared. Although the division between rich and poor had always characterized the city, the sheer size of the poor population and the persistent peasant migration to the city had created a new situation.⁵ The writer took the occasion of the empire's first census to explore the slums (*trushchoby*). Adopting the role of a census collector, he scrutinized the human drama that unfolded in Moscow's underworld.⁶ His intention was to make the poverty and desperation of the lower classes an issue. At the same time he severely criticized the ways Russian society traditionally dealt with the poor: Tolstoy declared almsgiving and charity to be part of the problem rather than a solution to the worsening social crisis. His intention was, as he put it, to break down "the barriers which men have erected between themselves."⁷ The deeper he descended into Moscow's underworld, the more Tolstoy himself experienced the divisions of urban society.

³ On the rural migrants, see Bradley, *Muzhik*, 103–248.

⁴ On Tolstoy's life and literary career, see Troyat, *Tolstoy*; Wilson, *Tolstoy*; on Tolstoy's impact as a social critic, see Marks, *How Russia Shaped The Modern World*, 102–39.

⁵ On poverty in Russia, see Jahn, *Armes Russland*.

⁶ For another account of Moscow's prerevolutionary underworld, see Vladimir Giliarovskii, *Moskovskie Nishchie* (Moscow: Dela, 1896).

⁷ Lev Tolstoy, "What to Do? Article on the Census in Moscow (1882)," in his *What to Do?* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1887), 1–14, 10.

Tolstoy, however, found it hard to live up to his own ideals of urban brotherhood. On the one hand, he found “working people” in the slums, expressed his respect for their toiling, and was surprised to encounter a number of happy individuals in the worst parts of town. On the other hand, he met those whom he found hard to include in his compassion. He was disappointed when prostitutes rejected their reformation. And he was equally distressed when he found out that his donations provided only limited aid: “It very frequently seemed to me that the very money which they squeezed out of me rendered their condition worse instead of improving it.”⁸ The writer understood that improved relations would be necessary to gain the trust of the poor and to be able to help them improve their position. At the same time he experienced the divisions of the Russian city firsthand: when he took a number of his acquaintances to the night lodgings to confront them with the city’s worst spots, the group was met with open hostility. Many fled when they entered the buildings. Tolstoy, who started his exploration with optimism, ended up disillusioned about the prospects of establishing community. Still, his essays on Moscow had a lasting impact. He created some of the topoi that came to haunt the city: the squalor of the slums, the misery of the lodging houses, the disrepute of Khitrov market, the devastating effects of alcohol, and the ubiquity of vice were the central themes the reformist elite that strove to eradicate these problems continually reiterated.⁹

These were, however, not the only problems that characterized the city. Moscow also faced growing infrastructure problems. As in other regions where urbanization rapidly progressed, Moscow’s services did not meet the needs of its citizens. The densely settled center, which consisted roughly of the area within the Garden Ring, was generally well supplied (exceptions were such sores as Khitrov market), but the vast outskirts and industrial areas that surrounded the city were in decidedly worse shape. Housing on these outskirts often lacked the basic amenities of modern life. Electricity, street lights, and water supply usually arrived long after people had set-

⁸ Lev Tolstoy, “Thoughts Evoked by the Census of Moscow (1884–85),” in *What to Do?*, 15–168, quotation on 74.

⁹ A. Petrovskii, “Khitrov-rynok i ego obitateli,” *Vestnik Evropy* 29 (1894): 579–93.

tled. Urban expansion was largely unchecked and unplanned. Traffic was another major problem: the development of the city's foreign-run streetcar system proceeded steadily but slowly. Any commute across the city proved difficult. Although the city was contemplating the construction of a subway even before 1914, Moscow's traffic problems remained unsolved. The greatest challenge the city faced, however, was the provision of adequate and affordable housing. The much debated flophouses of Khitrovka were only the tip of the iceberg: even skilled workers could usually not afford to rent an apartment. Compared to other European cities that also faced this problem, overcrowding in Moscow was extreme.¹⁰ Many families had to share one room housing several generations, servants and maids had little privacy, if any at all. While overcrowding dominated in the center, bad sanitary conditions characterized the outskirts. Beyond the Garden Ring, the features of the modern city faded and the structures began to resemble Russian villages. Wooden huts, unpaved roads, and unplanned development left their mark on these areas where city and state were largely absent. Where modern Moscow ended, rural Russia began.

The imperial court ignored these issues and chose the former capital as the location for its cult of ancient Russia. Tsar Nicholas II, who came to the throne in 1894, picked Moscow as a place to celebrate his reign. Traditionally, Russian tsars had been crowned in the Kremlin. Increasingly, they had used the coronation to construct their images as rulers.¹¹ Nicholas, however, decided to use the occasion to accomplish two things at once: he turned the city into a stage for his cult of ancient Muscovy and he tried to use its space to legitimize his rule. According to his glorification of Russian statehood, the ancient unity between people and tsar had to be retrieved in order to heal the divisions inflicted by modernity. Still, even this reactionary utopia contained modern elements—Richard Wortman has spoken of the “modern flair” of the festivities.¹² The international press was invited and closely covered the crowning. Moscow's center was illuminated with electric lights for the occa-

¹⁰ Mazanik, “City as a Transient Home,” 51–70.

¹¹ See Wortman, *Scenarios of Power*.

¹² *Ibid.*, 342.

sion. Most important, the thousands of peasants who flocked into the city in anticipation were to give credibility to the unity between people and autocrat. The empire's nobles were ordered to wear seventeenth-century costumes, a lavish feast was prepared on the outskirts of Moscow: on Khodynskoe field, food and presents were distributed. However, the regime's attempt to stage mass support ended in disaster. As state officials were unable to exercise crowd control, the situation on the field deteriorated already in the morning hours: within minutes a stampede led to more than a thousand dead and thousands more injured. To make matters worse, the new tsar and his entourage decided to ignore the tragedy and pressed for a continuation of the celebrations. Thus, the coronation, which was intended to boost the legitimacy of the tsar, in fact undermined it.

In urban politics the autocracy hardly performed better. During the reform period the state had allowed limited urban self-government.¹³ In 1873 the Moscow City Duma, a house of representatives, an *uprava*, an executive committee, and a mayor chosen by the duma were established.¹⁴ Although the electorate was strictly limited—only 1–2 percent of the male population was allowed to vote, and out of those only 25 percent actually participated—the reforms were a game changer. They excluded the overwhelming majority from government, yet allowed Moscow's economic elite to become politically active.¹⁵ The reform period ended the dominance of the nobility; in 1876 the city had its first non-noble mayor. The duma assembled Moscow's merchant and professional elite, which shared a more liberal vision of urbanity than the imperial administration. Still, the state remained powerful in Moscow.

The state's representative was the governor, who held a strong position. He controlled the police and the garrison. In 1881, following the assassination of Alexander II, St. Petersburg revoked some of the instruments of self-rule. Until 1917 local governments had to work under a state of emergency, which granted extraordinary

¹³ See Hanchett, "Tsarist Statutory Regulation," 91–114. On the Moscow Duma, see Pisar'kova, *Gorodskie reformy*.

¹⁴ On the duma's policies, see Thurston, *Liberal City*, 59–84.

¹⁵ On Moscow's merchant elite and its social life, see Petrov, *Moskovskaia burzhazia*; Il'in et al., *Moskva rubezha*.

powers to the minister of internal affairs and his local representative, the governor. Thus, the decision-making of the local elite was constrained by the vague, but broad, power of the state. And this was by far not the only opposition the *duma* faced: it also remained distanced from ordinary people, who lacked representation. Although the majority of *duma* members understood the challenges of modern urbanity and began to view Moscow as a metropolis worthy of planned investment, its own legitimacy and power remained restricted. The budget proved to be too small to rule and reform effectively; like the rest of Russia, Moscow remained “undergoverned.”¹⁶

Reform before Revolution: Moscow as an Urban Laboratory in Autocratic Russia

In the city statute of 1892, the state delegated a wide range of tasks to the local administration. At the same time, the tsarist state reserved the right to prevent regulations. When the city of Moscow asked the Ministry of the Interior in 1903 to impose strict rules for the lodging houses at Khitrov market, St. Petersburg ignored this initiative. When the municipal administration renewed its request in 1907, it was quickly rejected. The state declared that the city had no right to regulate these enterprises.¹⁷ Thus, an attempt at slum renovation—an issue debated for decades—was successfully prevented by the state. Still, despite these restrictions the *duma* managed to turn Moscow into Russia’s powerhouse of social reform.

Poverty in Moscow exemplified that the modern social questions had arrived in Russia. The sheer size of the problem demanded an organized approach and suggested that the limited role of government—both central and local—in poor relief, including the widespread reliance on charitable associations, would no longer suffice. Journals such as *Trudovaia Pomoshch* (Work relief) were discussing Western models of poor relief. After the famine of 1891/92, the authorities in St. Petersburg realized that these questions could no

¹⁶ See Colton, *Moscow*, 69.

¹⁷ Thurston, *Liberal City*, 41.

longer be ignored. But a reform commission that discussed various models of poor relief did not lead to the introduction of new jurisdiction on the state level.¹⁸ This failure to act left room for local initiative. Moscow's *duma* also perceived the need to reorganize poor relief along modern lines. In 1887 the city had gained control of welfare institutions such as the workhouse, and the city's elite began to realize that it could seize the opportunity to apply the principles of Western charity and organize aid in a more systematic manner. One protagonist behind these reforms was the Moscow University history professor Vladimir I. Ger'e, who also served as an expert on the imperial level and headed a *duma* commission. While acknowledging the need to establish modern poor relief, Ger'e was an outspoken opponent of a social policy conceived and implemented by the imperial state. Rather, he believed that the municipal government ought to solve urban problems. Ger'e did not want to entitle the poor to receive benefits; he strove to create conditions in which they could support themselves. Not the state, but the fellow citizens of those in need would help them integrate productively into society.

Ger'e found a model for municipal poor relief in the German city of Elberfeld.¹⁹ This town in the Rhineland had been divided into districts, each supervised by volunteers. These visitors would take individual care of those in need: they would act as friends, but ideally also discipline their clients and pave their way into life as productive citizens. Other European cities had already adopted this model and managed to lower their expenditures. The Elberfeld system seemed promising because it could function with limited funds. Basically the *uchastkovye popechitel'stva o bednykh* (district guardianships of the poor) were supposed to finance themselves through the dues of their members. The introduction of this measure in 1894 instantly turned Moscow into a model of progressive urbanism in Russia. It was an example of the search for Western models to solve Russian problems. The transfer of the system from the German context to the specific conditions of Moscow was hardly

¹⁸ Lindenmeyr, *Poverty*, 142–60.

¹⁹ Vladimir I. Ger'e, "Opyt gorodskogo popechenia o bednykh," *Vestnik Evropy* 35 (1900): 567–85; Lube, *Mythos und Wirklichkeit*, 158–84.

discussed. Initially, the system generated enthusiasm and more than 2,000 volunteers could be recruited. In 1895 the Ministry of the Interior even began to propagate its introduction in other cities. Still, it is difficult to assess the achievements of Moscow's guardianship system. Despite the fading of the initial momentum, the guardians certainly made an impact. They certainly helped to establish the issue of poor relief among Moscow's public.²⁰ Yet it is also clear that a system based on voluntary help, with rather limited and, again, voluntary funding, was hardly capable of meeting the needs of a boomtown. Still, in the 1890s the vision of Moscow's elite became clear: it wanted to be in charge of a modern city that could be home to prosperous business as well as a civic-minded populace. Many were striving for an accountable government that would establish and defend order, and for a broadening of the responsibilities of the municipality. But when political tensions rose and revolutionary conflict escalated in 1905, the divisions within Moscow became visible. Civic spirit made way for street violence.

Moscow in Civil War:

The Russian Revolution as Urban Catastrophe

Urban violence and social revolution reshaped the Russian metropolis in the twentieth century. In 1905 large parts of Moscow's population joined the revolt against the tsarist regime. This first Russian Revolution foreshadowed the cataclysmic events that completely altered the city. The violence of 1905 revealed the limits of liberal reform: when under the stress of external conflict, the inner divisions became ever more apparent.

Defeat in the war against Japan and unrest in St. Petersburg stood at the beginning of 1905.²¹ Political frustration had accumulated in the decades following the Great Reforms. The combination of political incapacitation and harsh social conditions was a prerequisite for the events that eventually shattered the empire. However,

²⁰ Lindenmeyr, *Poverty*, 164–66.

²¹ Ascher, *The Revolution*; Pavlov, *Opyt pervoi revoliutsii*; for a case study of Moscow, see Engelstein, *Moscow, 1905*.

the revolutionary dynamic could only gain momentum in light of the weakness of the state—the defeat in war—and the ability of the masses to engage in armed conflict with the state. Since the turn of the century, Russia's radical opposition, right-wing supporters of the tsar, and various ethnic groups had established militias (*druzhiny*). In 1905, these men turned into combatants and formed the core of the insurrection. But street violence and urban disorder were not only driven by the conflict between the state and the radical opposition: in Moscow and throughout the empire, they signaled the disintegration of traditional society as well as the unregulated conflict between diverging cultures and social groups. Many violent acts of 1905 could hardly be classified as political; rather, these were acts of “hooliganism,” plundering, and random violence that indicate cleavages beyond the political struggle. In early twentieth-century Russia, violence became a resource used to divert attention, to hurt others, to destroy their status, and to acquire property.²²

In Moscow, 1905 began with attempts at both violence and political reform. On 4 February, only weeks after St. Petersburg's Bloody Sunday, the Kremlin was the sight of a spectacular political murder. Grand Duke Sergei Aleksandrovich, the tsar's uncle and a controversial figure who had served as city governor from 26 February 1891 to 1 January 1905, was killed by a bomb. His assassination showed the determination to use violence of the regime's opponents. Still, Moscow also witnessed reform initiatives during this time of crisis. While the city was ruled by emergency decrees, the second congress of *zemstvo* delegates assembled there to discuss the prospects of self-government.²³ Officially, the meeting was illegal, but the state chose not to intervene. In September the city hosted another meeting of *zemstvo* representatives. By this time, however, the political crisis had worsened and the political development had become less predictable. Moscow hosted these conventions that started work on a constitution, but life on its streets was no longer safe. Foreign diplomats reported numerous criminal incidents and noted the inability of the authorities to establish order.

²² On urban hooliganism in tsarist Russia, see Neuberger, *Hooliganism*.

²³ On the *zemstvos* as institutions of local self-government, see Philippot's *Les Zemstvos*.

Moscow's railroad workers supported the general strike that erupted in October. It brought urban life to a standstill. As the food supply was interrupted, the population was troubled by soaring prices and uncertainty. Political tension led to the October Manifesto and the granting of civil liberties by the tsar. This long-awaited concession was, however, met with hostility by the defenders of the old regime: the "black hundreds" roamed the streets and spread terror. Their most prominent victim was Bolshevik revolutionary Nikolai Bauman, murdered in Moscow on 18 October 1905. His funeral two days later turned into the first show of force by the revolutionary movement. It illustrated the politicization of the urban masses and the Bolsheviks' ability to mobilize and broaden their support base. When a workers' council (*sovet*) was founded on 21 November 1905 in Moscow, the instruments of Revolution were in place: desperate masses, the willingness to use force, and an alternative power structure. All it took was the decision to start an armed uprising to plunge the city into civil war.

For the first time in the twentieth century, the futile uprising of December 1905 brought days of street fighting to a major European city.²⁴ The revolutionaries resorted to guerilla tactics and tried to use the city itself as a shield, while the tsarist forces used heavy weapons against the insurgents. Buildings and enterprises were shelled—a strategy that caused casualties among civilian bystanders. When the uprising was defeated, the state had scored a Pyrrhic victory. It had restored order at a high cost and its prestige was at a low point. Moscow had seen the Imperial Army act as if on a punitive expedition in the borderlands of the empire. Both sides had proven that they could turn the city into a battleground—not only in the political, but also in the military sense. Still, the ramifications of the uprising also affected the opposition. Many liberals understood that not only the regime was uncompromising, but also the radical opposition. All in all, the events of 1905 exemplified that Moscow's future was closely tied to the fate of the Russian state.

This interdependence between the Russian state and Moscow could again be observed during World War I and the Russian Revo-

²⁴ For an account of the fighting, see the reports in the journal *Pravo*; and Ascher, *The Revolution*, vol. 1, 317–31; Engelstein, *Moscow, 1905*, 202–27.

lution. The decisions that eventually led to urban catastrophe were not taken in Moscow; yet the city provided the space for the unfolding of catastrophic events. In Moscow, as in other parts of the empire, the declaration of war was greeted with enthusiasm.²⁵ For a short while the conflicts between the regime, reformers, and the population seemed to fade. Yet the lack of success on the battlefield and the deteriorating economic situation paved the way for renewed tension. Even such an ardent supporter of autocracy as Lev Tikhomirov, the editor of the monarchist *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, expressed his doubts and pondered in his diary in April 1915: "Ten months of war—to what result? One scandal."²⁶ The first disturbance of civic order, however, was not instigated by the revolutionaries. It was a pogrom against German businesses and residents in the last week of May 1915 that ravaged the city. Looting and violence destroyed the German community, which was targeted even though many families had lived in the city for decades.²⁷ For the Swiss printer Ernst Derendinger, who had been working in Moscow since 1910, this was the first experience of urban disorder. He witnessed that even his colleagues took part in the "German pogrom." Derendinger observed that "their eyes were burning and glowing in the most mysterious way and you could see that they were overcome by an urge to destroy [*Vernichtungstrieb*], and all their lower instincts would not let them rest."²⁸ Even the Russian patriot Tikhomirov was shocked. He noted in his diaries: "If the war does not end soon, I fear we will have a much more violent revolution than in 1905."²⁹ While the city had officially been governed by emergency measure since 1881, it was now on the threshold of more than three decades of a constant social and political state of emergency: the Russian Revolution and the subsequent rule of the Bolsheviks.

During the brief interlude of the provisional government that followed the old regime's collapse in February 1917, some prominent

²⁵ Ruga et al., *Voina i Moskvichi*.

²⁶ Repnikov, *Dnevnik L.A. Tikhomirova*, 57.

²⁷ Riabichenko, *Pogromy 1915 goda*.

²⁸ Gehrig-Straube et al., *Ernst Derendinger*, 111. On Derendinger's experience of everyday life between tsarism and Stalinism, see Behrends, "Mit fremdem Blick," 384–403.

²⁹ Repnikov, *Dnevnik L.A. Tikhomirova*, 70.

Moscow liberals joined the provisional government and had their last chance to implement reforms. But the new order failed to provide stability in the country and to secure legitimacy among the masses. In February the old regime collapsed in a carnivalesque fashion, and the furor of urban conflict returned with the October Revolution. The Bolsheviks established their control of Moscow during several days of street fighting.³⁰ From 1917 on, life became dangerous for the elites and, indeed, anyone perceived as bourgeois. If identified by his or her clothes or other signifiers of wealth and status, any person could become a victim of the revolutionary mob. Ernst Derendinger remembered that people resorted to wearing shabby outfits to avoid trouble on the streets. The writer Ivan Bunin captured the fear and uncertainty during the first weeks and months of the Bolshevik power. He roamed the streets in search of good news and recorded the rumors, the hopes, and the despair of the first revolutionary winter. He and his fellow members of Moscow's intelligentsia could no longer be at home in the city. Some were arrested, robbed, or tried; most made plans to leave the city and the country.³¹ The correspondent of the German liberal newspaper *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Alfons Paquet, noted in the summer of 1918 that Moscow's bourgeoisie as a social group and the places where it once gathered had ceased to exist. According to Paquet, the once opulent city was governed by misery and its population anticipated even harder times: "They are facing a long winter without bread and heat. Those who still have clothes and fur are afraid that they will be taken away."³²

Ironically, in January 1918 the Bolshevik government fulfilled a Slavophile dream and returned the Russian capital to Moscow. Once again, the Russian state intervened in the development of the city. The decision to move the Bolshevik leadership to the Kremlin meant an even closer connection between city and government. Moscow could no longer develop alternatives to official policies.

³⁰ For an account of Moscow in 1917, see Koenker, *Moscow Workers*.

³¹ Iwan Bunin, *Verfluchte Tage: Ein Revolutionstagebuch* (Zurich: Dörlemann, 2005).

³² Alfons Paquet, *Im kommunistischen Rußland: Briefe aus Moskau* (Jena: Diederichs, 1919), 71.

Instead, the city became the seat of the Party-state and the showcase of revolutionary Russia.

Random street violence lasted until the end of the Civil War in 1922, with political violence escalating after the start of the Red Terror in September 1918.³³ The Bolsheviks, who initially lacked a program of urban reform, used repression to broaden their social base and to paralyze their opponents by means of reprisal, intimidation, and fear. The Cheka, the Bolshevik secret police, was the instrument created to dominate the city. Its victims were often representatives of the old regime such as former ministers and high officials, officers, merchants, and priests. But it also targeted representatives of other parties ranging from the conservatives and liberals to the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. Petrovsky Park, the cemeteries, the former monasteries, and the Cheka headquarters at Lubyanka Square became infamous killing sights. During the first years of Bolshevik rule, there were more than ten concentration camps in Moscow. From 1918 to 1922, political repression was accompanied by the Bolsheviks' attempts to refashion the city. Officially a reaction to attacks on Vladimir Lenin and the Bolshevik elite, the terror soon became an instrument of social engineering. Thousands became political refugees and emigrated from Russia. In addition, the economic breakdown drove Muscovites out of the city. At the end of the Civil War, Moscow's population had been halved. From an expanding metropolis, the city had turned into a ghost town.

In their first attempt at social policy, the Bolsheviks transferred the rural practice of "black repartition" (*chernyi peredel*) to the city. The Bolsheviks spoke of "housing repartition" (*zhilishchnyi pere-del*). During the winter of 1917/18 and then more gradually until the end of 1920, the city experienced several waves of coercive resettlement.³⁴ Workers and their families were given apartments of the nobility and bourgeoisie in the center. This violent solution of the housing problem was the Bolsheviks' first attempt to create the Moscow they envisioned. The housing policy indicated the Party-

³³ For a collection of eyewitness accounts, see Sergei V. Volkov, ed., *Krasnyi terror v Moskve: svidetel'stva ochevidtsev* (Moscow: Airis Press, 2010); see also Borrero, *Hungry Moscow*.

³⁴ See Colton, *Moscow*, 119–23.

state's willingness to use force in order to change the city's social structure. In contrast to tsarist Moscow, the state assumed the sole responsibility for housing—a far-reaching decision that would haunt the Bolsheviks for decades.³⁵

Equally important to the Bolsheviks was the cultural transformation of the new capital. On a grander scale than the tsars, the Bolsheviks attempted to turn urban space into a showcase of their achievements. Following the destructions of tsarist symbols, the Soviet rulers used the city as a stage for the representation of their power. The 1920s saw the first wave of Soviet monuments and festivities in the new capital. But simultaneously, the reemerging dynamics of hyper-urbanization demanded the Party-state's attention. The advent of the New Economic Policy (NEP) brought a new influx of migrants into the city. Once again, thousands of peasants arrived in Moscow. The liberalization of trade and the resurrection of industry allowed a slow return of modern urbanity. Politically, however, this meant the retreat of the Bolsheviks from war communism's radicalism. The state gave up its monopoly on trade and the supply of foodstuffs. Markets that had been outlawed, but could never be completely suppressed during the Civil War, returned to the city and provided goods for the population.

To the writer Walter Benjamin, a Berliner who visited the Soviet capital during the winter of 1926, the city seemed typically Russian: he saw the ancient churches, a certain lack of order, the exotic peasant markets, and was amazed to see not trucks but sledges on the streets.³⁶ After World War I and the Revolution, the old Moscow had returned.

Stalinist Modernity: The Great Plan and the Great Terror

After the end of the Russian Civil War, the questions of urban development that haunted the city returned full force.³⁷ The future development of Moscow was decided during Stalin's Great Break (*Velikii perelom*).

³⁵ See Meerovich, *Nakazanie zhilishchem*.

³⁶ Walter Benjamin, *Moskauer Tagebuch* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1980), 17–50.

³⁷ Hoffmann, *Peasant Metropolis*.

In 1925, the writer Pavel Lopatin outlined an urbanist vision for the Soviet capital. The underlying assumption of his booklet on Moscow's future is that modernity would entirely reshape urban life. The text illustrates the Soviet reception of hypermodern visions that circulated in the West. More important, Lopatin, who would later become the voice of Stalinist Moscow, attempted to establish the distinction between the capitalist city's future and the prospects for a socialist Moscow. The author conceded that the West had great plans for future cities; his booklet was illustrated with drawings of megacities made up of skyscrapers, highways, and tunnels on several levels. Yet, as Lopatin put it, every society dreams in its own way (*posvoemu*). At the same time that he acknowledged the greatness of Western modernity, he criticized its lack of humanity. According to him, the interests of few, not the welfare of many, were its driving force.

Lopatin outlined a panorama for Moscow in 1950. He adapted the Western model of the "garden city," which was introduced to Russia before 1914, to the Soviet context and imagined a city where workers would live in settlements consisting of small apartment blocks.³⁸ In contrast to American cities, which he portrayed as the dark side of modernity, sunshine, light, and fresh air would dominate. Several parks and green zones would stretch across the urban landscape.³⁹ The majority of the population would live in these suburbs. While the author envisioned skyscrapers in certain areas of the center and a gigantic "palace of labor" as the representation of Soviet power, the assets of the socialist city were to be its culture and its closeness to nature. Overall, Moscow would be a "sunny communist garden city."⁴⁰ What Lopatin summarized on these pages were the achievements of Soviet city planning since the

³⁸ The concept of the garden city had already been introduced in Russia before 1914 and remained prominent throughout the Soviet period. For an early adaptation, see Vladimir Semionov, *Blagoustroistvo gorodov* (Moscow: P.P. Riabushinskago, 1912). The first garden city settlement in the Russian Empire was erected in Riga: A. Enshch', "Perviy gorod-sad v Rossii," *Gorodskoe Delo* 22 (1911): 1571–75. See also Starr, "The Revival and Schism," 222–42.

³⁹ Pavel I. Lopatin, *Gorod nastoiashchego i budushchego* (Moscow: Novaia Moskva, 1925), 98–101.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 105.

Revolution.⁴¹ It was his rhetorical trick to adopt the Western idea of the garden city and turn it into a communist ideal. Yet this was only one option for a Soviet urban future still shrouded in uncertainty. The following years would show that neither Russian nor international experts were sure what a “socialist city” might look like. From the beginning, the transfer of Western concepts and ideas was officially played down. The division between the Western capitalist city and the *sotsgorod* implied that Soviet urbanity was superior to Western models.⁴² But Miliutin’s constructivist vision with its emphasis on collective life was only one possibility.

With the introduction of the five-year plans and Stalin’s “revolution from above” in 1929, the urban question in the USSR came to the forefront again. Stalin’s violent modernization drive was based on forced collectivization; within months it led to mass starvation and resulted in the civil war against the peasantry. The first five-year plan focused on industrial enterprises and towns built from scratch—most famously the steel town Magnitogorsk in the Urals, but it also had consequences for Moscow.⁴³ Because of the upheaval in Ukraine, along the Volga, and in central Russia, the influx of rural laborers fleeing collectivization and hunger increased. The famine of 1931 meant that thousands of starving peasants arrived at Moscow’s train stations. Even the introduction of an internal passport system could not halt the influx. On the one hand, the state’s reaction included repression and a continued purge of the cities. On the other hand, the Stalinist leadership realized that it had to improve conditions—especially in the capital—if it was to maintain the illusion that an ideal socialist city was in the making. Under these pressures, the urbanist debate intensified. It moved from limited pluralism and international involvement to Stalin’s Master Plan of 1935.

⁴¹ On postrevolutionary town planning in Moscow, see Colton, *Moscow*, 112–18; Bodenschatz, *Städtebau im Schatten Stalins*, 147–65.

⁴² See Nikolai Miliutin’s classic work *Sotsgorod. Problema stroitel’sтва sotsialisticheskikh gorodov: osnovnye voprosy ratsional’noi planirovki i stroitel’sтва naselionnykh mest SSSR* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’svo, 1930).

⁴³ On Magnitogorsk, see Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*.

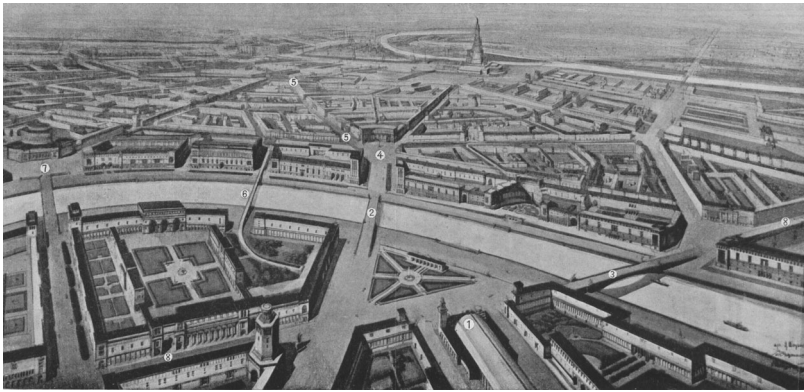


Figure 5.1. Aerial view of the reconstructed Moscow with Palace of the Soviets at the center; courtesy of Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

In the years between the onset of the cultural revolution in 1928 and the takeover of urban affairs by Stalin's right hand, Lazar' M. Kaganovich, in the summer of 1931, the USSR witnessed a short phase of urbanist experimentation and debate.⁴⁴ This brief interlude was characterized by openness toward various approaches and co-operation with celebrities from the modernist movement. Ernst May participated in the Magnitogorsk project. Le Corbusier was chosen to build in Moscow and got involved in the planning of the Soviet capital.⁴⁵ During this period, international experts developed their ideas for the expansion of the Soviet capital and making of the "socialist city." The modernist architects were part of a larger movement of western experts and workers to the USSR who helped in the modernization drive of the first five-year-plan. An official assessment of their plans, published in early 1933 in *Sovetskaia Arkhitektura*, summarized their ideas. At the same time, Soviet authors criticized the Western experts for not having fulfilled the tasks set by the Party.⁴⁶ Only the ideas of the German architect Kurt

⁴⁴ On Kaganovich's tenure see Rees, *Iron Lazar*, 123–64; see also Colton, *Moscow*, 209–89.

⁴⁵ Cohen, *Le Corbusier et la mystique de l'URSS*; see also Clark, *Moscow, The Fourth Rome*, 78–135.

⁴⁶ P. Gol'denberg and B. Gol'denberg, "Zadachi sotsialisticheskoi rekonstruktsii Moskvy," *Sovetskaia arkhitektura* 1 (1933): 6–25.

Maier received praise. His plans called for the preservation of Moscow's historic layout and for expansion in the southwest of the city. They would later be incorporated into the General Plan for Moscow—without, however, being officially acknowledged.

While Stalin and the Bolshevik leadership followed their strategic imperative to mobilize the population and make the country fit for war, Western experts were serious about developing an alternative modernity. While the Bolsheviks were looking for representations of their ideological and imperial ambitions, the modernists favored designs that shunned the traditional aesthetics of power. The regime's sense of beauty and grandeur differed fundamentally from the ideas the modernists tried to realize in Soviet Russia. At the beginning of the 1930s it became clear that these differences could not be reconciled: they facilitated the break between the regime and the modernist movement. The official line in Stalinist urbanism was spelled out by Kaganovich in a speech he delivered in 1931; the same year Stalin set the USSR on its race to modernity.⁴⁷ Kaganovich signaled that the development of Moscow was no longer open for debate. It would rather be decided in the highest echelons of the Party-state. According to Kaganovich, the October Revolution had already established socialist cities in Russia. Still, he saw "gigantic challenges" ahead.⁴⁸ These lay in the "reconstruction" of Soviet cities as part of the transformation of the whole country. He criticized utopian visions of collective living or Western innovations such as skyscrapers, and emphasized that Moscow's "reconstruction" must acknowledge the historical shape of the city. He also called attention to the workers whose living conditions had to be improved. At the same time, however, Moscow's Party leader underlined that the transformation of the capital should change the way of life (*byt*) of its inhabitants. Life in a well-ordered, more convenient, and beautiful city would change its citizens. For Kaganovich, these ideas could not be achieved in conjunction with the West, but called for struggle and confrontation. The Soviet leaders aimed to transform Moscow into the showcase

⁴⁷ Lazar' M. Kaganovich, *Za sotsialisticheskuiu rekonstruktsiiu Moskvy i gorodov SSSR* (Moscow and Leningrad: Moskovskii Rabochii, 1931).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

of Soviet modernity, that is an organic and superior modernity lacking the contradictions of Western life. This also implied waging war against the old Moscow: the beginning of the 1930s saw the large-scale destruction of churches, monasteries, and historical buildings in the city. Historic names in the center had to make way for representations of Soviet culture: Tverskaia, the central boulevard of Moscow, famously became Gorky Street.⁴⁹

During the 1930s three major projects exemplified Stalinist urbanity: Moscow's metro, the Moscow-Volga Canal, and the construction of the Palace of the Soviets. All of these endeavors were interconnected, and each had its own specific purpose. It was one of the accomplishments of the General Plan for the Reconstruction of Moscow to incorporate these schemes into one overreaching blueprint for the future metropolis.

As stated above, the years 1932 and 1933 marked the USSR's break with the international modernist movement. The decisions made in the competition for the Palace of the Soviets, a central high-rise building that was supposed to be erected on the spot where Moscow's largest cathedral had stood until its demolition by the Bolsheviks, signified that foreign architects were out of favor with the Soviet leadership.⁵⁰ The Soviet architect Boris Iofan was awarded the first prize and put in charge of the project. Le Corbusier and other Western competitors were turned down. The Bolshevik cultural functionary Anatoly Lunacharsky outlined the reasons for this decision.⁵¹ He argued that architecture in the capitalist world was in decline—this could be observed since the nineteenth century. While every new epoch was characterized by a new style, this new greatness could not be found in the West. Lunacharsky proclaimed that “functionalism” and other “ultra-modern” (*ultra sovremennye*) trends had no concept of beauty and therefore no

⁴⁹ The renaming of streets in central Moscow signified the connection between architecture and literature in Soviet culture. See Clark, *Moscow, The Fourth Rome*, 79.

⁵⁰ See the official documentation in *Dvorets Sovetov: Vsesoiuznyi konkurs 1932 g.* (Moscow: Vsekhudozhnik, 1933); see also Hoisington, “Ever Higher,” 41–68.

⁵¹ Anatolii V. Lunacharskii, “Sotsialisticheskii arkhitekturnyi monument,” *Stroitel'stvo Moskvy* 10, nos. 5–6 (1933): 3–10.

place in the USSR.⁵² He expressed his hope that “mankind” would soon forget “functionalism” and that Soviet architecture would achieve greatness similar to Ancient Greece or the Italian Renaissance.⁵³ Greatness was to be achieved through monumental designs. It is an irony of history that the very monumentalism of Iofan’s design impeded its realization. At the end of Stalin’s reign, only the metro station the Palace of the Soviets had been completed while the construction of the palace itself had been abandoned.



Map 5.1. Plan of the Moscow underground 1935; courtesy of Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

The first Stalinist project that yielded results was the metro. Construction began in earnest in 1931, and the first line opened four years later.⁵⁴ The subway system was a necessity for the expanding metropolis; traffic problems had afflicted Moscow even before the Revolution, and had worsened since. But the metro was more than just

⁵² On the importance of beauty, see also “Nashi goroda, ulitsy, zdania dolzhny byt’ krasivy,” *Stroitel’stvo Moskv* 9, no. 5 (1932): 6–8. See also Clark, *Moscow*, 119–22.

⁵³ Lunacharskii, “Sotsialisticheskii arkhitekturnyi monument,” 4. These historical styles gained significance for Soviet architecture of the 1930s. See Clark, *Moscow, The Fourth Rome*, 97–99.

⁵⁴ For a history of the metro, see Neutatz, *Die Moskauer Metro*.

public transport. The Bolshevik leadership attached a multitude of messages to the metro.⁵⁵ The philosopher Boris Groys has pointed to the project's utopian dimensions and called the metro "the blueprint for a communist future."⁵⁶ The extravagant designs of the stations exemplified the regime's promise for a modern future; the perfect city which did not yet exist would be built underground. In a speech before workers, Kaganovich emphasized that Moscow's metro was being built at a much faster pace than in Berlin, Rome, Tokyo, or London. He lauded his audience for their hard work and dedication and reminded them of their task: they had to build the "best metro in the world."⁵⁷ Thus, the metro was to prove that the USSR was building a superior, unique, and self-sufficient modern city.

The third central project was the Moscow-Volga Canal. This proposition was fueled by the metropolis's growing water demand and by the necessity to regulate the Moscow River. At the same time, however, it was tied to the regime's violent *modus operandi*. It connected the "reconstruction" of Moscow with the Bolshevik attempt to rebuild and modernize Russia. The regime intended to prove its capability to transform geography and to establish a more rational order. The canal's construction was supervised by the NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs). It was built through the use of slave labor of prisoners.⁵⁸ Lopatin praised the secret police for its efforts. He believed that hard labor would mold new Soviet men from the prisoners. Thieves, bandits, and kulaks would learn to love the canal and the Soviet order.⁵⁹ Hence, the Stalinist transformation of the metropolis brought the Gulag into the city itself. For the thousands of people in the camps, the terror that came to haunt the city's elites in 1937/38 was already there: it was part and parcel of Stalin's road to modernity.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ For the metro's cultural significance, see Bouvard, *Le métro de Moscou*, 113–66.

⁵⁶ Groys, "U-Bahn als U-Topie," 156–66, quotation on 159–60.

⁵⁷ Lazar' M. Kaganovich, *O stroitel'stve metropolitena i plane goroda Moskv* (Moscow: Moskovskii Rabochii, 1934), 20.

⁵⁸ Khlevniuk, *The History of the Gulag*, 110–17.

⁵⁹ Pavel I. Lopatin, *Kanal "Moskva-Volga"* (Moscow: Moskovskii Rabochii, 1934), 14.

⁶⁰ On the Great Terror in Moscow, see Colton, *Moscow*, 285–91; and Schlögel, *Terror und Traum*.

The General Plan for the Reconstruction of Moscow, adopted in 1935, united these central (and many lesser) projects into one grand scheme.⁶¹ While the Palace of Soviets impressed with its height, and the metro was a system of underground palaces, the Master Plan impressed with the sheer magnitude of space it aimed to reorder. It subjugated the whole of Moscow and turned it into a playing field of the Party-state. The plan, soon to be known as Stalin's plan, represented an idea of urbanism in an age of total power; its design attempted to reshape Moscow as an expression of imperial ambition. It failed to mention foreign influences or examples, but the plan clearly invoked the enlightened tradition of well-ordered space and the Haussmannian idea of the representative capital, and merged them with the Bolsheviks' hyper-authoritarian visions. It made the old Moscow all but disappear behind the new diagonal schemes. The concept of the garden city was still present on the pages of the plan: large green belts were to surround the center of Soviet power. In this Bolshevik vision, the seat of power was to be situated in an ordered garden. The outbreak of war forced the Soviet government to abandon its dream of realizing the plan within ten years. After the end of the war, however, new challenges had to be met.

The Making of Soviet Moscow and Russia's Path to Modernity

The ambitions of Stalin's Plan served as the cornerstone for a cult of Moscow that the USSR celebrated. During Stalin's rule, it was closely tied to the leader cult around Stalin himself.⁶² When the city's 800-year anniversary was commemorated in 1948, the cults around Moscow, Stalin, and the Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War were merged into one gigantic festivity. De-Stalinization did not substantially change the attitude toward Moscow: until the end of the Soviet rule, the Party-state remained in charge of urban development.⁶³ Khrushchev's flirt with modernism signaled a change in style, not in structure.

⁶¹ *General'nyi plan rekonstruktsii goroda Moskvy* (Moscow: Moskovskii Rabochii, 1936).

⁶² Behrends, "Metropole der Macht," 55–84.

⁶³ Rüthers, *Moskau bauen*, 219–80.

Stalin's Moscow is an example of the state's power to regulate urban affairs. The development of the city remained tied to the fate of the regime and even to the ideas of individual strong men. Stalinist modernity, however, was in many ways a *Scheinmoderne*: it was an aborted attempt to make the peasant's metropolis disappear behind monumental façades. For the majority of the population, life in Moscow was still characterized by poverty and misery. Moscow's path to modernity was based on the representation of Bolshevik power and a drive to beautify the city according to the regime's taste. In the international arena, Soviet modernity was portrayed as superior and as lacking the contradictions that hampered Western development: Where chaos had reigned, order was achieved, where Russia had been backward, it had to be established as a model for the world. With Stalin's death, these dogmas were devalued, but never entirely abandoned.

In Moscow, the arrival of the Bolshevik regime had decided the conflict between the state and the municipality. The Soviet capital would not regain the fragile independence that had characterized the city before the Revolution. Politically, the development of Moscow could not be separated from the regime. Socially, the problems typical of urban life in tsarist Russia continued to dominate in the USSR. Rapid growth and peasant migration could only briefly be interrupted by the great catastrophes of the twentieth century. Bolshevism was at once the attempt to turn the city into the regime's stage and to solve Russia's problems using radical—and often violent—means.

6. Athens, 1890–1940: Transitory Modernism and National Realities

Eleni Bastéa

Introduction: Concepts of Modernity

As the painter M. G. wakes up, wrote Charles Baudelaire around 1860, he “watches the flow of life move by, majestic and dazzling. He admires the eternal beauty and the astonishing harmony of life in the capital cities, a harmony so providentially maintained in the tumult of human liberty. He gazes at the landscape of the great city, landscapes of stone, now swathed in the mist, now struck in full face by the sun.”¹ This image of nineteenth-century Paris as the quintessential modern city has inspired writers, urban designers, and historians, becoming the yardstick against which all modern cities are measured.

“And so, walking or quickening his pace, he [the modern man, the flâneur] ... is looking for that indefinable something we may be allowed to call ‘modernity,’ for want of a better term to express the idea in question. The aim for him is to extract from fashion the poetry that resides in its historical envelope, to distil the eternal from the transitory.”² For Baudelaire, “modernity is the transient, the fleeting, the contingent; it is one half of art, the other being the eternal and the immovable ... You have no right to despise this

¹ Charles Baudelaire, “The Painter of Modern Life” (c. 1860), in his *Selected Writings on Art and Literature*, translated by P.E. Charvet (New York: Penguin, 1972), 395–422, 400–401.

² *Ibid.*, 402.

transitory fleeting element, the metamorphoses of which are so frequent, nor to dispense with it.”³

Baudelaire’s modernity, as sociologist Scott Lash and anthropologist Jonathan Friedman point out in *Modernity & Identity*, “is not *la moderne* of the abstract (and positivist) individualism constituted by Durkheim’s *conscience collective* in turn-of-the-century France but that of Simmel’s aestheticization of everyday life in turn-of-the-century Berlin.”⁴ Reviewing the broad field of modernity and modernism, Lash and Friedman juxtapose several competing positions. There is Jürgen Habermas’s abstract, high modernism of “the ought” and Marshall Berman’s subjective, populist, low modernism “of ‘the is’; the here and now, *la vie quotidienne*.”⁵ Max Weber’s high modernism, which privileges judgment and cognition, is contrasted with the subjective and transitory low modernism, the “modernism of the streets” as described by Berman in *All That Is Solid Melts into Air* and by Michel de Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life*.⁶

The city has now become an active player in the project of modernity. Baudelaire’s is not an uncomplicated view of modernity, as it hovers between the classical and the transitory. There is the vision of the city as an ideal place “of eternal beauty and ... harmony.” But there is also the city of the flâneur with its messy and malleable street life. In fact, the city and the flâneur have become a dynamic duo that cannot exist independently of one another. Finally, there is also Baudelaire’s impatience with the past, even its outright dismissal. Modernity makes its own rules.

Most scholars have considered Baudelaire’s reflections applicable only to cities that were central to the birth of modernism, cities like Paris, London, Berlin, or New York. Certainly, Baudelaire did not have Athens in mind when he described a day in the life of a modern painter. Yet many of the characteristics and aspirations that defined modern men in Paris were shared by their contemporaries in Athens and other peripheral European cities. His definition of modernity, which embraced the fleeting and the new while emphatically reject-

³ Ibid., 403.

⁴ Lash et al., *Modernity and Identity*, 2.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Berman, *All That Is Solid*; Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

ing the old, can also help frame modernity in twentieth-century Athens, which was characterized by extensive destruction of the old urban fabric. Modern Athens underwent significant urban changes. The Greek state, however, was never transformed by the industrialization and land development that forged the economic and industrial revolutions in other European countries. Modernity in Athens remained a matter of appearances. For that matter, Baudelaire's descriptions of modernism in Paris—the low modernism of the streets that accepts and embraces the transitory, the temporal, and the incomplete—help describe the transitory nature of modern Athens.

Focusing on urban change in Athens between 1890 and 1940, I use the following two seminal events to frame the discussion: (1) the first modern Olympic Games, held in Athens in 1896, and (2) the fourth meeting of the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM), held on the liner *SS Patris II* and in Athens in 1933. Through the analysis of these events, I examine the urban development of Athens as seen by local inhabitants and foreign visitors, and review major changes that took place between 1896 and 1933.

Historical Background, 1833–1896

After the Greek insurrection against the Ottoman Empire (1821–1827) France, Britain, and Russia signed the London Protocol of 1832 that declared Greece a monarchical and independent state. The seventeen-year-old Prince Frederick Otto of Wittelsbach, son of the philhellene King Ludwig I of Bavaria, became the first king of Greece. Forty years later, Otto was forced from the throne by an army-backed revolt. The Protecting Powers—England, France, and Russia—offered the Greek crown to Prince William George, also seventeen years old, of the Danish Glücksburg dynasty.

Upon ascending the throne in 1863 as George I, the new king declared: “The aim of my ambition is this: to make Greece, as far as that is dependent on me, a model kingdom to the East.”⁷ “Model

⁷ Bastéa, *Creation of Modern Athens*, 23. For the history of Greece, see Clogg, *A Concise History*. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from the Greek and French are by the author.

kingdom,” as the historian Elli Skopetea has pointed out, was synonymous with “modern European state.”⁸ The king’s statement expressed the undisputed direction of Greek politics and policy since 1821: the modernization and Europeanization of Greece. King George I envisioned a Greece that served as a bright beacon to the rest of the lands of the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, most of which were still part of the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, twenty years later, Greece was still depicted in the local press as a chrysalis: not quite the old Greece anymore, but not yet part of Europe, either.⁹ Throughout this period, the concepts of modernization and Europeanization were identical and interchangeable.

As far as architecture and urban design are concerned, the country’s modernization had begun long before the reign of King George I. Planners and architects employed by Governor Ioannes Kapodistrias, who came to power in 1828, were already implementing European models as they designed plans for both new and existing towns, and continued to do so under King Otto.¹⁰ Despite the constant domestic and international turmoil, Greece strove to build a coherent national culture and identity oriented both toward its own citizens and toward the Greeks of the diaspora. Urban design and civic architecture, along with the institutions of public education, the army, and national ceremonies, became the main agents of the nation building project.

Modernization and Urban Development, 1833–1896

When Athens became the capital of the Greek kingdom in 1834, it was a modest town with a population of 12,000.¹¹ An original plan for modern Athens, designed by the German-trained architects Stamatios Kleanthes and Eduard Schaubert in 1833, and approved by the government, organized the new downtown around a triangle of

⁸ Skopetea, *To “prototypos vasileio,”* 62.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ See Bastéa, *Creation of Modern Athens*, ch. 3: “From Barbarity to Civilization: Planning the Modern Greek State.”

¹¹ Leontidou, *Poleis tes siopes*, 48.

new, straight, major streets. Although later altered and modified, the plan became imprinted on the modern city: Hermou Street ran east to west; Athenas Street ran north to south; Piraeus Street ran northeast to southwest; and the parallel streets University (Panepistemiou) and Stadiou ran northwest to southeast. The first major new building, the royal palace, rose prominently on the eastern node, near the intersection of Hermou and Stadiou streets. Other civic and residential buildings, financed by private and public patronage, included the university, the cathedral, the academy, the national library, and the archaeological museum.



Figure 6.1. Athens, Panorama, facing east, from the Acropolis, c. 1900. Author's collection.

The acropolis hill, home to the Ottoman garrison personnel and their families during Ottoman rule, was restored to its classical—if ruined—state; all post-classical additions were removed.¹²

Pride in the city's development is evident both in the domestic press and in travelers' accounts. "Stadium Street is the most beautiful in the city," commented the French diplomat and travel writer

¹² Bastéa, *Creation of Modern Athens*, 69–180.

Charles de Moüy in 1887,¹³ like “the boulevard des Italiens and the Champs-Élysées of Athens ...”¹⁴ From three to five o’clock in the winter and from five to eight in the summer, all Athenians promenade on the great paved sidewalks of this large thoroughfare. If one wishes to meet someone, all he has to do is walk up or down ... There are hardly any boutiques on this street, generally reserved for luxury residences and public edifices.”¹⁵ A few of the shop windows, noted Charles Tuckerman, the US ambassador to Greece (1867–1874), “be it the jeweller, tailor or silk mercer, almost rival those of the Palais Royal.”¹⁶ Traffic continued well into the night, when the city still reverberated with the sounds of the carriage wheels, passersby, horses, and the uproar of the trams.



Figure 6.2. Athens, Stadiou Street, c. 1900. Author’s collection.

By 1896, Athens was transformed into a bustling capital of 123,240.¹⁷ Elegant parks, tree-lined avenues, and neoclassical man-

¹³ Charles de Moüy, *Lettres athéniennes* (Paris: E. Plon, 1887), 32.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁶ Charles K. Tuckerman, *The Greeks of To-Day* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam’s, 1886), 40.

¹⁷ Leontidou, *Poleis tes siopes*, 83.

sions gave the city a modern, European appearance. Yet money for this ambitious construction did not come from locally generated income. Rather, wealthy Greeks of the diaspora became national benefactors, while others found investment opportunities in the fledgling kingdom.

Perceptive upper-class Athenians who had traveled abroad knew that the impressive new building façades did not always tell the whole story. The academy building (1887), for example, designed by the Danish architect Theophil Hansen and constructed with funds from a diaspora donor, was one of the most impressive structures. The institution of the Academy, however, lacked both the funding and the manpower necessary to fulfill its scientific mission. Not only did Greece lack the means to support the Academy, it also lacked an adequate number of elementary schools. In 1896, the literary critic Emmanuel Roides pointed out that the “dining room of the restaurant Minerva can be compared with those in Paris, but not with the Parisian conditions, [and the meals at Minerva cannot be compared] to the beefsteaks offered to the [Parisian] diners ... [T]he Greeks abroad ... seem to believe that the most urgent benefaction toward their country is its decoration with luxurious structures, even if they are not immediately useful.”¹⁸ Athens acquired the *appearance* of a modern capital, but lacked the infrastructure of a bona fide modern financial center that could truly support its building boom.¹⁹

Unlike expensive new structures that housed a small elite of Greek and foreign residents, the development of new streets, sidewalks, and parks affected all Athenians. Public opinion, which I have culled from contemporary Athenian newspapers, literary publications, town hall meetings, and letters to the government by residents, expresses a rather unified position: pride for the new city plans and anxious anticipation of their implementation. Although individuals objected to changes affecting their own property (as

¹⁸ Emmanuel Roides, “He akademia choris akademiaikous” [The Academy without Academics], in *Lefkoma: He Hellas kata tous Olympiakous agonas tou 1896* (Athens: Hestia, K. Maisner and N. Kargadoure, 1896–97 [reprinted Athens: Pontiki, 1996]), 227. Also cited in Bastéa, *Creation of Modern Athens*, 200.

¹⁹ For a parallel study of Belgrade, see Jovanović, “The City in Our Hands,” 32–50.

state compensation was never sufficient), there was a shared understanding regarding well-designed cities: clean, well-lit, with straight streets, regular sidewalks, tree-lined avenues, well-lit parks and squares, and well-built new civic and private buildings. Athenians were eager to see their capital turn into such a city. Newspapers paid close attention to these developments and, on the whole, supported the project of transforming Athens from “a Turkish village” with irregular roads to a well-appointed city that now belonged to Europe. And any planning deviations were promptly criticized by the press.²⁰

The government’s efforts to preserve an extensive archaeological zone around the Acropolis for future excavations were met with resolute resistance. Unable to obtain building permits, many inhabitants constructed houses illegally on public land. One of the earliest such settlements was the work of builders from the island of Anafī, who arrived in Athens during King Otto’s reign to construct the new structures in the neoclassical style. They built a group of small, island-inspired dwellings for themselves and their families in the archaeological zone, at the foot of acropolis hill. Many of these *Anafiotika* houses survive to this day, now viewed as valuable examples of vernacular architecture that contrast the formal face of nineteenth-century Athens.²¹

Athenian journalists and intellectuals worried incessantly about foreign opinion. How will Athens live up to its name? What will travelers think of the shameful garbage on the Acropolis? All developments were evaluated with an eye to both domestic needs and foreign impressions, a mostly self-imposed fishbowl existence, always subjected to foreign scrutiny. “Becoming European” remained the propelling force throughout the nineteenth century.

Architecture and urban design reflected both the accomplishments and the limitations of the young kingdom. Outwardly, Athens acquired a European appearance, but it retained its Ottoman past on the inside. The façades of the new major buildings were regular and well-appointed, meeting the streets at right angles. Their rears, however, were often less regular, conforming to the city’s preliberation

²⁰ Bastéa, *Creation of Modern Athens*, 118–27.

²¹ On the *Anafiotika*, see Kaftantzoglou, *Ste skia tou ierou vrachou*.

property lines. A similar contrast characterized the habits of the people themselves. In public, the well-to-do residents appeared modern, rational, and cosmopolitan. In private, they maintained their religion, family beliefs, and local attachments.

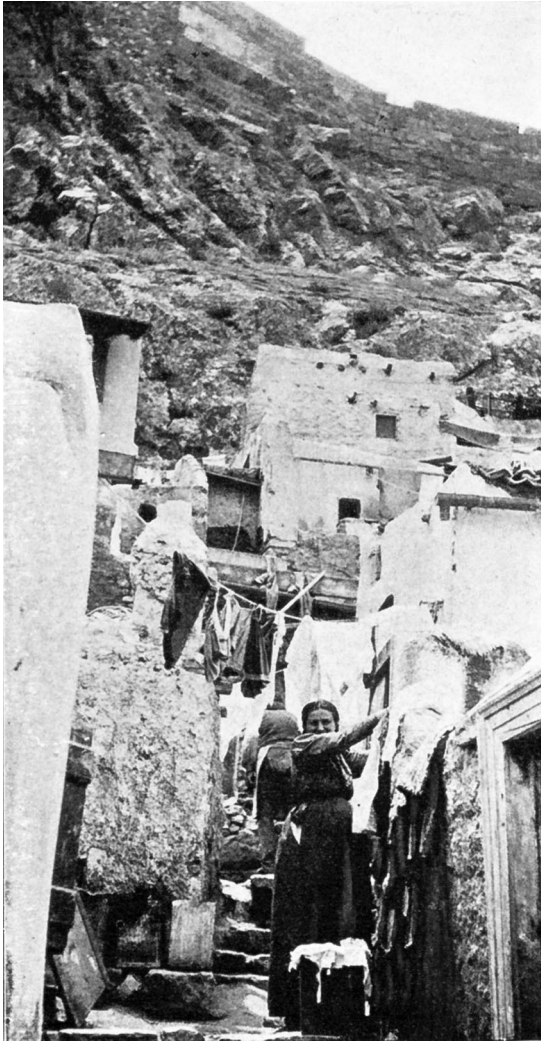


Figure 6.3. Athens, Anafiotika houses on the slopes of the Acropolis, c. 1900.

Author's collection.

The residents of Athens were not alone in experiencing these contrasts of modernity. One could certainly observe similar disparities between outward appearances and actual conditions in late nineteenth-century Paris, Berlin, or London. Local intellectuals and perceptive foreign visitors focused on the contrasts of Athens: the modern façade versus the premodern backyard, the European clothes of the Athenians versus their Oriental family customs. Had they compared Athens with a contemporary city elsewhere in Europe, they would have found several unexpected similarities. But instead, they compared the real and tangible Athens with an idealized modern metropolis of their imagination, both unreal and unattainable.

Finally, even though the West continued to cast Greece in the classical light, by the last decades of the nineteenth century local sentiment began to shift away from the uncritical archaeolatry of the kingdom's early days. Greeks realized the need to modernize the country's infrastructure in order to enter European markets. The pro-business Prime Minister Charilaos Trikoupes inspired the population with a series of technological and infrastructure public works projects, the most dramatic one being the opening of the canal in the Isthmus of Corinth (1882–1893).²² Beyond new city plans, modernization in Greece entailed building train tracks, opening new roads, constructing bridges, and developing local industries. But the West continued to regard Greece primarily as the cradle of classical civilization.

Athens and the Olympic Games, 1896

The first modern international Olympic Games commenced in Athens on 25 March 1896, a symbolic date coinciding with the Feast of the Annunciation and the anniversary of the outbreak of the 1821 War of Independence. Their success laid the foundations for a major international tradition that continues to grow in scope, political significance, and symbolism.

Preparations for the Olympic Games became a national affair. The main undertaking was the rebuilding of the ancient Panathenaic

²² *Ibid.*, 201–4.

Stadium, a large-scale project started in 1874. The old marble quarries of Mt. Pentele were reopened, with hundreds of laborers working in two shifts to clear the stadium site for the installation of new marble seats. By the time the games commenced, only part of the stadium was finished in marble while the rest was fitted with wooden benches painted white. The stadium was finally completed in 1900.

The Greek poet Kostas Palamas captured the prevailing archaeophile sentiment in his opening hymn:

Ancient spirit, immortal, pure father
Of the beautiful, the great, and the true
Climb down, appear, and shine right here
In the glory of your own earth and sky.²³

These well-orchestrated and symbolic gestures, however, do not tell the whole story. When the Greek government was originally approached about hosting the Olympic Games, it declined vehemently. First, Greece was in dire financial conditions. In 1893 it had been forced to declare bankruptcy. Second, it endeavored to modernize by developing its industry and infrastructure. The Greek government insisted that what the country needed was access to the European markets, not the revival of ancient athletics—however noble. Countering the spirited efforts of the organizer Pierre de Coubertin, the Trikoupes government advised him to inaugurate the “peaceful modern competitions” in Paris.²⁴ Coubertin argued that the revival of the Olympic Games was a necessary antidote to the evils of industrialization. In the end, he convinced the Greek opposition and the Greek Crown Prince Constantine, who agreed to serve as president of the organizing committee.²⁵ Once Greece agreed to host the games, the domestic tide turned in their favor and the whole country engaged in their successful realization.

Attendance at the games, low in cost and affordable to everyone, itself became a lesson in modern living. A Greek article reported

²³ Ibid., 209.

²⁴ MacAloon, *This Great Symbol*, 182–84.

²⁵ Bastéa, *Creation of Modern Athens*, 206.

that already on the second day of the games “the people, having completely gotten used to order, easily found their seats, which most had selected in advance. The words right or left side, *skelos*, *sphendone*, tier this or that, above the landing or below, are no longer empty words or incomprehensible symbols, but old acquaintances, which they all have amiably at the tip of their tongues.”²⁶ Comfortable in a restored ancient stadium and participating in a modern spectacle that claims its roots in antiquity, the modern Greeks appeared conversant in the spatial languages of both the past and the present. The first modern Olympic Games fulfilled, and indeed surpassed, the expectations of the international organizing team and of the Greeks themselves.

Numerous foreign visitors appreciated the city’s European character, the manners of its inhabitants, and the diverse offerings of its elegant shops and “cafés like those in Paris.”²⁷ For a brief two weeks, it appeared that the most important aspirations of the modern Greek nation—to join the ranks of the civilized nations of Europe, to be accepted as the legitimate heir to ancient Greece, and to forge its own distinct cultural identity—were finally realized. Baudelaire might have recognized his flâneur among the worldly Athenians strolling about the main boulevards.

Even though the success of the Olympic Games vindicated Coubertin’s persistence and filled the Greeks with pride, the games also succeeded in placing modern Greece back on the pedestal of antiquity—a reimagined antiquity to be sure, a product of the waning nineteenth century. Whatever the country’s actual economic and building progress toward modernity was, it remained mostly marginalized. Once again, Greece was called to play its familiar classical role as “the cradle of Western civilization,” a classical playground for the Western world.

²⁶ Spyros P. Lampros, “Ta athletika kai gymnastika agonismata en to stadio” [The athletic and gymnastic games in the stadium], in *Lefkoma: He Hellas kata tous Olympiakous agonas tou 1896* [Greece during the Olympic Games of 1896] (Athens: Hestia, K. Maisner and N. Kargadoure, 1896–97 [reprinted Athens: Pontiki, 1996]), 99–110, 106. Also cited in Bastéa, *Creation of Modern Athens*, 210.

²⁷ Burton Holmes, *The Burton Holmes Lectures*, with illustrations and photographs by the author (Battle Creek: Little-Preston Company, 1903), vol. 3, 21, legend under the photograph of a café.

Historical Background, 1897–1944

In 1912, Greece and its Balkan allies declared war on the Ottoman Empire, triggering the Balkan Wars. Greece made significant territorial gains, increasing its land area by 70 percent and its population from approximately 2,800,000 to 4,800,000.²⁸

Between 1919 and 1922, the Greek army led an ill-fated expansionist campaign against the Ottoman Empire ostensibly to incorporate the predominantly Greek coastal cities into the Greek state. Turkey and Greece signed an internationally brokered peace settlement, the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), stipulating the compulsory exchange of minority populations between Greece and Turkey. More than 1.1 million Christians from Turkey crossed the Aegean Sea to Greece, increasing its population by 25 percent, as Greece at the time had a population of almost 6 million. Over 380,000 Muslims left Greece, adding 5 percent to Turkey's population.²⁹ The political focus now shifted to the interior and the state undertook the formidable project of creating a unified Greek nation, a quarter of which included newcomers from the "Lost Countries," that is from territories primarily within present-day Turkey with a considerable Greek Orthodox population.

On 28 October 1940, Italian forces crossed the Greek-Albanian border and Greece entered World War II. Germany attacked Greece in 1941 and Athens fell during the same year. In June 1941 all of Greece came under the tripartite German, Italian, and Bulgarian occupation. The brutal German occupation (1941–1944) was followed by a violent civil war (1946–1949) that left the country scarred and divided. The ensuing mass migration to the urban centers once again created an acute housing problem. Multifamily apartment buildings were the logical answer to the post–World War II conditions in Greek cities.

Unchecked Urban Development, 1896–1940

The population of Athens continued to grow gradually, reaching 169,749 inhabitants in 1907 and 297,176 by 1920.³⁰ But by 1928, it

²⁸ Clogg, *A Concise History*, 83.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 101.

³⁰ Leontidou, *Poleis tes siopes*, 83.

nearly doubled to 459,211,³¹ 130,000 of them being refugees mostly from Asia Minor. By 1940, Athens had reached 476,582 inhabitants.³² The daunting task of settling and housing the refugees became the government's paramount project.

Although there were several new plans for Athens proposed in the early twentieth century, none were ever realized. These included plans by Paul Vakas in 1896, Ludwig Hoffmann (1908–1910), Thomas Mawson (1914–1918), Aristides Balanos (1917), and Stylianos Leloudas (1918–1921). Most offered versions of nineteenth-century grandiose designs, when the country focused on housing, hygiene, and infrastructure.³³ As the twentieth century progressed, most design decisions became the work of Greek architects and planners, who beginning in 1917 could be trained at the new School of Architecture, part of the National Technical University of Athens. Other significant developments included the establishment of the Ministry of Transport (1914) and the enactment of the progressive Town Planning Act (1923).

The lack of a single, unified master plan created ongoing planning obstacles. For example, in 1916 the plan for Athens was composed of 78 different parts and 498 separately approved changes that bore little connection to each other.³⁴ This problem was addressed by the Committee for the New Plan for the City of Athens. Under the direction of Petros Kalligas and after long deliberations (1920–1925), the committee proposed a new unified plan. Although initially approved by the government, it was revoked again soon after, in January 1926, primarily because there were no funds for its implementation.³⁵ Once again, the city's planning officers had to rely on earlier, outdated plans.

Throughout the nineteenth century, planning proposals and debates primarily concerned the approximation of Athens to European models. But after the military defeat of 1922 and the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, gone were the lofty concerns about aesthetics and European models. The survival, accommodation, and integration of the

³¹ Ibid., 159.

³² Ibid., 210.

³³ Bastéa, "Athens," 39–40.

³⁴ Exhibition Catalogue, *Athens in the 20th Century, 1900–1940* [in Greek] (Athens: Ministry of Culture, c. 1986), 30.

³⁵ Bires, *Hai Athenai*, 284–86.

new population left no room for new urban undertakings and imaginative ruminations.

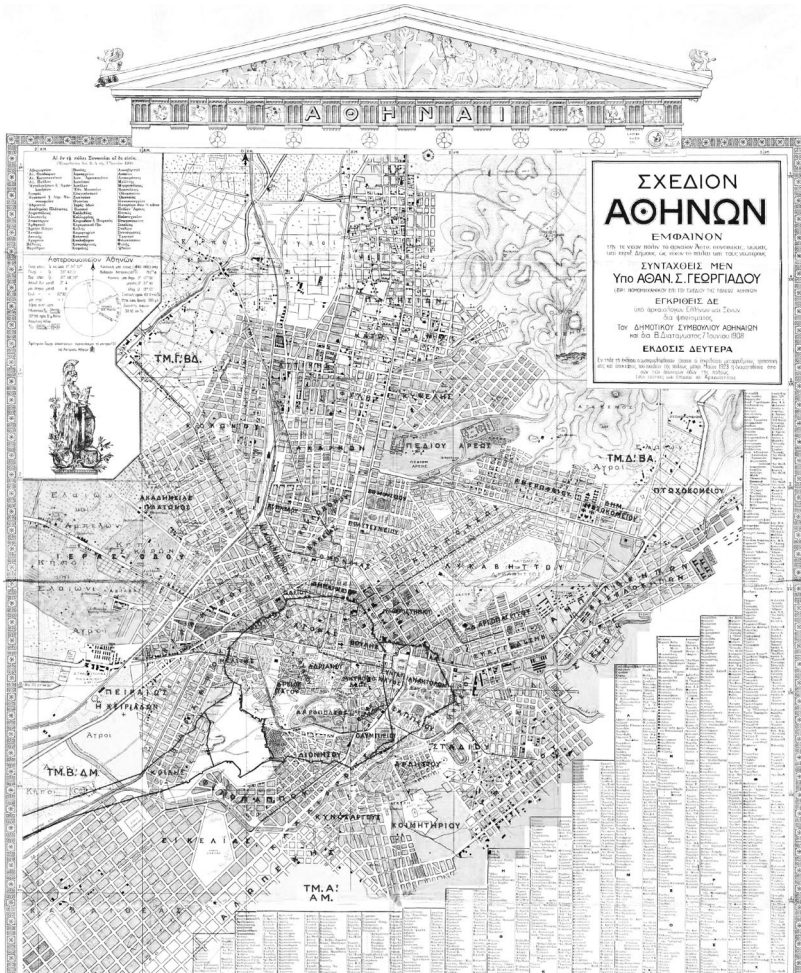


Figure 6.4. Athens, Map 1923. Drawn by Athanasios Georgiades, 2nd Edition. Source: Kostas Bires, *Hai Athenai apo tou 19ou eis ton 20on aiona* [Athens from the 19th to the 20th century] (Athens: Foundation of the History and Town Building of Athens, 1966), 2nd edition, 1995; p. 288.

What ensued was intensive, privately initiated, and little-checked urban construction. Land development became the primary

means of investment, resulting in high-density new housing and minimal public amenities. Athens grew without a plan. The inability and unwillingness of the government to approve any of the proposed plans or update existing ones, coupled with political turmoil and the pressing needs for refugee housing, resulted in widespread anarchy. Landowners and builders used their political connections to secure the incorporation of their lots into the city's ever-expanding piecemeal plan. Ruthless planning violations and extensive illegal construction were tolerated by the government, which remained weak and divided. New city sections often lacked basic services, roads, or public parks.

The situation was further exacerbated by competing government bureaucracies. For example, the City Planning Service of the City of Athens, established in 1925, proposed several planning improvements. These were often contradicted, however, by the Ministry of Public Works, which instead initiated housing developments in areas that were originally supposed to remain undeveloped.

Financial and political interests had already compromised the initial designs for modern Athens during the nineteenth century. But the press and residents who shared a vision for a well-designed city routinely criticized these conditions. After 1922/23, however, this shared vision for a better Athens all but disappeared. Pressing everyday problems and the widespread economic exploitation of real estate help explain people's indifference toward urban aesthetics.

Yet I believe that there was also a deeper reason for the lack of a shared vision of an ideal city: the alienation of the population itself. The newcomers and the locals, mostly poor and exhausted, competed for limited economic resources. Successive wars and frequent population displacements throughout the early twentieth century brought together people who lacked a sense of connection and identification with Athens. During the late 1920s, only one out of three Athenian inhabitants was actually born in Athens, the others being either refugees or immigrants from other parts of Greece. Despite its venerable history, if we define Athens as a community of people, as Aristotle did, it becomes apparent that we are dealing with a new city, a city of displaced people brought together by the political

upheavals of the early twentieth century.³⁶ Alienation is often considered one of the conditions of modernity. Rather than being a philosophical disposition, in Athens alienation is rather the result of population displacements and uncertain living conditions.

The poet George Seferis (1900–1971), himself a refugee from the Smyrna region and later a career diplomat for the Greek Foreign Service, captured this sense of rootlessness and alienation in several of his poems:

Wherever I travel Greece wounds me ...
 What do all these people want, who say
 that they are in Athens or in Piraeus?
 One comes from Salamis and asks the other
 if perhaps “he originates from Omonoia [Square]”
 “No, from Syntagma [Square] I originate” he responds and is
 pleased
 ...

George Seferis, “In the Manner of G.S.” (1936)³⁷

Further contributing to this sense of anonymity and alienation was the drastic land development and rebuilding that changed the face of Athens, rendering it unfamiliar even to its old-established inhabitants. This was codified by the enactment of the Horizontal Property Law in 1929, which legalized apartment ownership. The General Building Code and the Building Heights Decree of 1934 further intensified land development and real estate profits. And given people’s reluctance to invest in industry, agriculture, or other enterprises, land speculation and development became the major economic forces. As a result, between 1930 and 1940, approximately 450 new apartment buildings were constructed in the center of Athens alone.³⁸

³⁶ “It is evident, then, that a city is not a community of place ... but a city is a society of people.” Aristotle, *A Treatise on Government or, The Politics of Aristotle*, translated by William Ellis, Book III (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1935), 83.

³⁷ Seferis, *Poemata*, 99–100.

³⁸ This included new building in the areas Kolonakiou, Patesion, and Stadiou, Akademias and Panepistemiou streets. Sarigiannis, *Athens 1830–2000*, 106.

Given the lack of adequate housing, many of the refugees resorted to self-help housing on public land. Construction ranged from simple shelters made out of gathered materials to masonry buildings. Self-help housing, a common practice throughout the world, was already evident in Athens during the nineteenth century, but reached extensive proportions after 1922. Although these buildings have been described as “illegal dwellings” in English, the Greek term *αυθαίρετα* (*afthaireta*) is more correctly translated as “arbitrary,” “unpredictable,” “irregular,” or “unconventional.” Architect and architectural critic Dimitris Philippides has remarked that these “arbitrary dwellings” should be studied alongside some of the refugee housing and other vernacular architecture.³⁹ In fact, it is often impossible to draw the line between “vernacular” and “lacking building licenses.” All testify to the resourcefulness—and often talent and ingenuity—of the builders. All address the immediate needs of individuals and their families—without regard, however, to the rights of the general population or the overall needs of the city.

Athens and the CIAM IV meeting in 1933

In July 1933, CIAM IV, the fourth meeting of the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne, took place aboard the SS *Patris II* en route from Marseilles to Athens, and in Athens. Founded in 1928, CIAM was the international platform of the Modern Movement, focusing on housing and urbanism. Originally a progressive organization that thrived mostly outside the mainstream of the profession, CIAM was divided between the leftist architects who sought to realize a socialist revolution by means of the Congrès, and the liberals who considered it primarily a technical and cultural movement.⁴⁰ According to architectural historian Eric Mumford, CIAM IV “did not break as sharply with the Beaux-Arts academic tradition as did the German advocates of the ‘new building.’ A new emphasis on mythologized history, modern painting, and the mythic

³⁹ Philippides, *Neohellenike architektonike*, 159.

⁴⁰ Colquhoun, *Modern Architecture*, 217.

qualities of CIAM itself as an avant-garde tracing a new path across the Mediterranean were now present, and would remain an important part of CIAM's discourse into the 1950s and beyond."⁴¹

The theme of CIAM IV was "the Functional City," rather incongruously perhaps, given that it took place on a scenic Mediterranean cruise and in Athens, far from the industrialized cities of northern Europe. The meeting was dominated by Le Corbusier, who defined urbanism as a three-dimensional science, favored the concentrated city, and outlined the hierarchy of four functions: dwelling, work, amusement, and circulation. Le Corbusier's talk was followed by presentations of same-scale plans of various cities, prepared by different delegates. Among these was a presentation of Athens, prepared by the Greek CIAM delegate Stamo Papadaki. At the end, participants failed to reach consensus on resolutions regarding the "Functional City." The debate continued, with different versions of their findings published after the Congress in France, Germany, Greece, and elsewhere in Europe.⁴²

The rationalist approach to city planning advocated by the CIAM delegates did not influence later Greek planning, which continued mostly unchecked. CIAM IV did, however, provide the unique opportunity for Greek architects to meet international luminaries of the Modern Movement, most notably Le Corbusier. What left a lasting impression on the Greek participants was not the formalist urban proclamations of the proceedings, but the visitors' interest in local culture and vernacular architecture. Certainly, CIAM participants visited the Acropolis and other nearby antiquities and were duly inspired by the ancient remains. But they also visited Piraeus, the port of Athens, and admired the Greek fishing boats which, according to Le Corbusier, connected them to the Greek spirit that had produced the Acropolis.⁴³ After the opening meeting, some of the delegates, including Le Corbusier, took a four-day cruise to the Greek islands.⁴⁴ This was Le Corbusier's second trip to Greece, having first visited the country in 1911. His fascination with Greek vernacular architec-

⁴¹ Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse*, 85.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 79–81.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 84.

ture, which he extolled for its affinity to modernist formal sensibilities, encouraged Greek architects to seek inspiration closer to home, in the picturesque buildings of the Aegean islands.

Le Corbusier was not the only architect to notice local architecture. Anastasios Orlandos, professor of architectural history at the National Technical University, remarked on the occasion:⁴⁵

Our [Architecture] School, though by nature conservative ... adjusted to the contemporary demands and “murdered academicism” before the distinguished foreign gentleman Le Corbusier pronounced its death ... When in a few days you visit our smiling islands of the Aegean ... you will be surprised, I am sure, as I was surprised in the past, not only by their perfect simplicity, the logic of the arrangement and the purity of the lines of the ancient houses of Delos, but also and primarily by the fascinating vision of the houses on the islands surrounding Delos with their white, austere geometric volumes projecting into space in a manner at once harmonious and picturesque ... These modest little island houses are the archetypes of modern architecture.⁴⁶

Dimitris Pikionis (1887–1968), one of the most prominent Greek architects at the time, chose not to participate in the Congress. He criticized CIAM for its attachment to technological and functional needs, and for not allowing for the “possibility of sentiment.”⁴⁷ Although Pikionis had produced designs in the modern idiom (see, for example, his school on Lycabettus Hill, 1933), in his later work he incorporated aspects of vernacular architecture, the “architecture of the people.” “The local people are the true builders,” he proclaimed in 1925, “holding on to the ancient quality of their art ... [B]ut thoughtlessly we follow the foreign [prototype], always to be left behind it.”⁴⁸ Pikionis and Orlandos, however, remained in the minority. Most Greek architects continued to first look abroad for architectural direction.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Mallouchou-Tufano, *He anastelose*, 182, 228. I would like to thank Sofia Voutsaki for this reference.

⁴⁶ Giakoumakatos, *He architektonike*, 182.

⁴⁷ Philippides, *Neohellenike architektonike*, 209.

⁴⁸ Dimitris Pikionis, “He laike techne ki emeis” [Our folk art and ourselves] (1925), in his *Keimena* [Texts] (Athens: National Bank Educational Foundation, 1987), 53–69, 63, 69. Also cited in Bastéa, “Dimitris Pikionis and Sedad Eldem,” 162.

⁴⁹ Giakoumakatos, *He architektonike*, 182.

It is not surprising that the foreign CIAM IV delegates focused on Greek vernacular architecture. CIAM IV was the first of the “romantic” congresses,⁵⁰ an escape not only from the much more pressing urban problems of northern Europe, but also from the dark political developments in Germany and the USSR. Already in 1932, a year before Hitler’s appointment as interim chancellor, local National Socialists dissolved what they called the Jewish-Marxist Bauhaus in Dessau.⁵¹ Meanwhile, changes in Soviet policy resulted in the new neoclassical line of “art for the people” that rendered CIAM proponents a minority.⁵² Thus, earlier plans to hold CIAM IV in either Germany or the Soviet Union were scrapped and the arrangement of the Mediterranean cruise ship became a welcome last-minute solution. Once again, foreign visitors came to Athens searching for a refuge from the problems of the contemporary world. In 1896, that refuge was found in antiquity. In 1933, it was found not only in antiquity but also in simple, vernacular architecture and its honest inhabitants. And even though some Greek architects also cultivated this timeless picture of Greece, most were eager to join the race to modernity.

Today, CIAM IV is associated with the Athens Charter, published by Le Corbusier ten years later, in 1943. Despite its name, however, the Athens Charter was not an official publication of the CIAM IV proceedings in Athens. Rather, it reflected Le Corbusier’s own theories of urbanism, which were also influenced by World War II, the German occupation of France in 1939, and his involvement with the reconstruction committee in Vichy.⁵³ The Athens Charter included general statements about the conditions of towns and dogmatic proposals for their improvement. It prescribed a strict and formalist approach to architecture and urban design that included zoning with green belts separating the different urban functions. The predominant housing type was the high-rise apartment building. “High buildings, set far apart from one another, must free the ground for broad, verdant areas,” prescribed one of the Charter

⁵⁰ Frampton, *Modern Architecture*, 270.

⁵¹ Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse*, 76.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 73.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 153, 155.

articles.⁵⁴ This functionalist outlook came to dominate housing developments in the later twentieth century.

Modern architecture had already been introduced in Greece before CIAM. It was realized primarily through an ambitious elementary school building initiative. This extensive undertaking was launched by Alexandros Papanastasiou's government that succeeded Eleftherios Venizelos. Starting in 1930, it was implemented by Minister of Education George Papandreou and continued under the subsequent administration. Six thousand new schoolrooms were constructed and 2,000 existing ones were repaired across the country.⁵⁵ Although some of the schools followed neoclassical, neo-Byzantine and neotraditional influences, the majority displayed competent adaptations of the Modern Movement.⁵⁶ CIAM IV delegates visited the new schools and commented positively on their modern designs,⁵⁷ but this fact received little attention by the international press.

Parallel to the school building program, there was also a noteworthy hospital construction program, which was also initiated around 1930 and embraced modern architecture. Emphasis was placed on the construction of tuberculosis units, including two in Athens that were part of the Sotiria (Salvation) hospital complex on Mesogeion Avenue and were designed by Constantine Kitsikis and Ioannes Despotopoulos. Not all new civic buildings, however, followed the Modern Movement. Bank architecture remained conservative, adhering to the neoclassical idiom, while church architecture experimented with neo-Byzantine reinterpretations.⁵⁸

There is a common assumption that modern architecture was abandoned or even prohibited in Greece during the dictatorship of

⁵⁴ Le Corbusier, *The Athens Charter*, Article 29, translated by Anthony Eardley (New an, 1973), <http://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/11/03/ciam%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%9Cthe-athens-charter%E2%80%9D-1933> (accessed 6 April 2014), Article 29.

⁵⁵ Philippides, *Neohellenike architektonike*, 181. Also cited in Bastéa, "Dimitris Pikionis and Sedad Eldem," 154.

⁵⁶ Giakoumakatos, *He architektonike*, 212, 213, 217.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 215.

⁵⁸ I would like to thank Dimitris Philippides for his invaluable information and commentary regarding modern architecture in Greece in the 1930s.

General Ioannis Metaxas, who came to power in 1936. According to Philippides, nothing could be further from the truth. The Metaxas government never once took a position, verbally or in writing, against the Modern Movement or modern architecture. Metaxas himself remained patently indifferent to styles. Graver political matters demanded his attention. And although there were, indeed, several new public buildings that were designed in historical and classicizing styles, this was usually the result of design competitions, selected by conservative juries that were often influenced by contemporary trends in Germany and elsewhere.⁵⁹

Despite some excellent early examples of modern architecture, subsequent construction became derivative and uninspired, driven mostly by short-term profit. Land development remained the safest form of investment. Owners of single-family houses turned them over to small-scale developers who tore them down, replaced them with new apartment buildings, and gave the original owners a percentage of the new flats. These new buildings made of reinforced concrete frames, brick infill, and a stripped-down modernism became the country's new regional idiom. Modern architecture became the preferred style for industrial buildings, military, medical, and educational facilities as well as some museums, all reflecting the country's progress and improved social welfare. Classical forms were often employed for commemorative buildings, such as the Monument to the Unknown Soldier (1929/30).

Several writers have criticized the aggressive destruction of the built fabric. In 1935, the archaeologist Semni Papaspyridi-Karouzou first articulated the effect of the built environment on the residents' social relationships. She analyzed the radical changes of large-scale urbanization on the rural population and the ramifications of high-density living on family structure.⁶⁰ In 1934, the architect Vassileios Kassaridas criticized the "new formalism" that "pursued the unusual instead of the logical, the surprising instead of the useful, and the curious instead of the true."⁶¹ Yet neither the neoclassical nor the vernacular traditions could undo the destruction

⁵⁹ Philippides, e-mail correspondence, 16 January 2012.

⁶⁰ Philippides, *Neohellenike architektonike*, 193.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 191.

of the urban fabric caused by the lack of comprehensive urban planning and the pressing forces of unchecked capitalism.

Conclusion

Until 1922, Athens charted a fairly clear path to modernity. Despite the country's limited resources and nascent economy, the city had acquired a new plan, well-built structures housing governmental and educational institutions, adequate public transportation, elegant public squares, and an extensive Royal Garden. The road to modernity, which for Greece continued to mean "becoming European," was long, but clearly charted.

Like many contemporary plans, the original plan for Athens, designed by Kleanthes and Schaubert in 1833, recreated an eighteenth-century vision of the harmonious but static city with the monarch's residence at the fulcrum of the design. And even though—as successive uprisings demonstrated—the institution of the monarchy was not sacrosanct, the appeal of the orderly city remained powerful. Until 1922, the dream of a better Athens and the ambition to realize it proved a powerful unifying force. This vision rendered pre-1922 Athens a good example of classical modernism as outlined in the opening comments.

All that changed after 1922. As a result of the military defeat in Asia Minor and the dramatic population influx, the earlier preoccupation with planning was replaced by the acute demand for housing. The common vision of an ideal city disappeared from the discourse, never to be recovered. If the nineteenth-century city was Weberian, the twentieth century became Baudelairian. The elegant neoclassical house came to coexist with refugee housing and self-built structures on public land. The nation's political structure itself repeatedly came to the brink of collapse, due both to internal and external forces. Athenians learned to live with uncertainty, ambiguity, and disorientation—and that was precisely part of the experience of modernity in the Baudelairian sense. After all, modernity in the arts and architecture did not necessarily presuppose democratic governments, in Greece or elsewhere.

Acknowledging this different approach to modernity allows us to examine the changes in Athens in a new light and to begin to

understand their roots. Most of the scholarship on modern Athens bemoans the wholesale destruction of the city's nineteenth-century fabric and the onslaught of anonymous, utilitarian apartment buildings. Why this rampant self-destruction? Certainly, economic gain played a major role in the city's relentless urbanization. But that was only part of the reason. What has been called destruction, others could have called modernization. And modernization has traditionally set itself up against history, tradition, and local culture. Unless we understand the national realities that underpinned the political life of the capital, we are going to be unable to understand its urban development.

The pressing need for new housing, the lure of profit, and the appeal of the new and modern may not be the only reasons for the destruction of the city's fabric. It is important to underscore that one-third of the city's post-1923 population was born elsewhere and moved to Athens as refugees or internal immigrants from the countryside. These new residents did not share a common image of the city's recent past or future potential. Perhaps the continued destruction of the architectural past was in part a willful attempt to forget the traumatic historical events and prepare the ground for a better future. After all, new apartments with upgraded amenities held the promise of a brighter future. As the historian Eric Hobsbawm remarked, "the destruction of the past is one of the most characteristic and eerie phenomena of the late twentieth century."⁶²

What does the study of Athens contribute to our understanding of modernity, especially in the context of Central and Eastern Europe? Like some of the other European capitals, Athens shared an imperial past, though it did not enjoy a privileged status during the Byzantine and Ottoman eras. It remained a relatively small and peripheral city until the formation of the modern Greek kingdom in the early 1830s and the establishment of Athens as its capital. Athens grew at a brisk pace, though its physical growth was not supported by a parallel growth of the economy. Unlike the model of the Ottoman Empire that favored decentralized, local self-governance, the Western European model established by the kings Otto and

⁶² Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, 3. See also Connerton, *How Modernity Forgets*.

George I focused all powers in the hands of a centralized government. Yet the government itself remained weak, unable, and unwilling to enforce its own laws, including legislation pertaining to architecture and urban planning. Nevertheless, despite the weak civil society and the weak industrial and commercial base, modernization initially seemed within reach.

After 1922, the country's orientation turned sharply inward, away from Western Europe, as Greece was forced to accommodate the Asia Minor refugees and integrate them into the local, struggling economy. "Becoming European" lost its original attraction. Between 1922 and 1940, building a coherent national identity and Hellenizing the immigrants, some of whom did not even speak Greek, was the pressing order of the day. And although many architects and planners continued to propose and even realize modern designs, the government focused primarily on economic development, political survival, and national defense.⁶³

These findings are in keeping with the larger patterns of urban development that characterized other new European capitals created after the dissolution of empires. As Nathaniel D. Wood observed in his contribution to *Capital Cities in the Aftermath of Empires: Planning in Central and Southeast Europe*, capital cities were shaped by two competing forces: the myth of the nation and the myth of Europe. "The process of planning national capitals," Wood points out, "clearly blended these two mythic versions of modernity."⁶⁴

⁶³ See, also, Koumaridis, "Urban transformation," 213–41.

⁶⁴ Wood, "Not Just the National," 258–59.

7. Between Rivalry, Irrationality, and Resistance: The Modernization of Belgrade, 1890–1914

Dubravka Stojanović

Winding streets, blind alleys, representative buildings in unfitting locations, central districts without clear urban planning, crooked single-story shacks that lean against modern multistory buildings, almost unsolvable traffic problems—this situation in present-day Belgrade is the product of specific modernization processes that affected the appearance, urbanization, and infrastructure development of the capital of Serbia. At the same time, the specific modernization of the capital was paradigmatic for overarching processes in the country: it marked two centuries of its attempts to catch up with European currents as well as the breaks in its development, its disorientation, setbacks in its striving toward Europeanization and, quite often, its self-isolation.¹ Thus, understanding the controversial modernization processes of Belgrade also enables us to understand initiatives as well as obstacles that Serbia faced (and still faces), in its attempts to find its place in the contemporary world.

When Belgrade became the capital of the autonomous Serbian state in 1841, it primarily had strategic importance due its position on the Danube River on the Ottoman-Austrian border. Just like in

¹ Dimić et al., *Srbija 1804–2004*. On the modernization processes in more detail, see the books edited by Perović: *Srbija u modernizacijskim procesima 19. i 20. veka*, 1; *Srbija u modernizacijskim procesima: Položaj žene*; *Srbija u modernizacijskim procesima 19. i 20. veka*, 3; *Položaj elite*; *Srbija u modernizacijskim procesima: Žene i deca*. All translations in the text from the Serbian sources are mine.

other Ottoman cities, its population primarily lived in ethnically based *mahalas*: one Turkish, one Serbian, one Jewish, and one Roma. On steep slopes by the Danube and Sava rivers, streets were constructed diagonally and did not intersect at a right angle; houses were single-storied, mostly with gardens where numerous domestic animals were also kept. The streets were neglected, rough cobblestone made traffic and cleaning very difficult. The inherited ancient Roman and Turkish aqueducts could not meet the needs of the population, so water was acquired from public pipes.² This situation could not be changed for a very long time due to the peculiar dualism of government in Belgrade: it was the capital of an autonomous state, but it was also the seat of the Ottoman vizier as well as the garrison that occupied the fort of Kalemegdan. It is understandable that under these political circumstances and in light of the unresolved issue of cities, no one—neither the Serbian nor the Ottoman side—invested in the city. Things began to change only after 1868, the year the Turks left Belgrade as well as other Serbian cities.

The ambitious authorities of the young nation state faced a difficult task. It was necessary to tidy up the neglected city, provide it with a European look, and build representative structures as symbols of statehood and the newly created national consciousness. That first wave of modernization was initiated by Prince Mihailo's February 1869 edict, which launched the planning of the city according to the plans of the engineer Emilijan Joksimović. His main aim was to set up an orthogonal street pattern, to straighten and extend the main street, Knez Mihailova, and begin the construction of representative objects.³ In order to speed up the implementation of these measures, the Joksimović regulation plan, a draft proposal of the Law on the City of Belgrade, was sent to the State Council. However, this law was not adopted until the 1920s, which effectively blocked the capital city's modern development. Development hence proceeded without a legal basis or general urban planning resolution, which was not adopted until 1924.⁴ For the purpose of

² On the early nineteenth-century history of Belgrade, see Čubrilović, *Istorija Beograda*.

³ Ibid., 311.

⁴ Nedić, "Urbanističko uređenje," 175.

this chapter, it is most important to emphasize that the first attempt at modern urbanization and the introduction of European standards began while the Turkish garrison was still in Belgrade, but for many reasons remained unrealized for the next four decades.

The city's modernization was soon stopped by the resolution of the Eastern Question, and the subsequent wars between Serbia and the Ottoman Empire between 1875 and 1878. This created a gap of almost a decade, and the next modernization wave was initiated by the city's mayor Vladan Đorđević in 1885. Soon after taking office on 1 August 1884, he delivered to the city assembly a very precise report on "the state of city affairs."⁵ It was the first systematic insight into the degree of development of the city's infrastructure. A detailed description of all the relevant city planning problems that Đorđević set out as priorities of his administration followed on more than one hundred pages: "to complete a modern sewage system in Belgrade, to provide the city with enough good water, to illuminate it, and pave roads according to the modern principles."⁶

The city's image as portrayed in this detailed report was gloomy: water that was "brown as the plowing after every rain," unlit streets, or cobblestone on which it was difficult to walk.⁷ The report included opinions of European experts consulted on certain issues, showing the effort to profit from the experiences of foreign engineers who had reached the most efficient solutions in their own cities. Expert views from London, Jena, Paris, Danzig, Frankfurt, Berlin, Grünberg, and Leipzig were published as an appendix to the mayor's report.⁸

Following the adoption of the report, the city assembly elected a commission of three: two engineers and the mayor himself. The commission traveled between 11 November and 24 December 1884, visiting Budapest, Vienna, Munich, Strasbourg, Paris, London, Berlin, Frankfurt, and Danzig. Their aim was to get acquainted with the latest methods of city planning, and select infrastructure systems most appropriate for Belgrade's conditions and needs.⁹

⁵ Vladan Đorđević, *Beogradski opštinski poslovi: Izveštaj predstavništvu Beograda* (Belgrade: Opština beogradska, 1884).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁸ *Ibid.*, I–LVI.

⁹ Nedić, "Pripreme za moderno," 287.

Based on the knowledge and insights gained, the commission compiled the report, in which plans and proposals for the key projects were presented for the first time: waterways, sewage, city regulation, the introduction of electricity, and trams.¹⁰ In the report, the commission suggested to the city representatives different technical solutions as well as the budget necessary for their implementation. However, already in August 1885, only a year after coming to power, Đorđević was voted out of office, all the efforts he had launched were stopped, and his commission's report was forgotten.

The example of the Đorđević commission is quite important, almost paradigmatic. It demonstrated that the authorities could be efficient, productive, and well organized when there was will and determination: the whole effort, from the first report with the analysis of the existing situation to the detailed report of the commission that visited European cities, was completed in only a few months. The example of the Đorđević commission was also important because this mayor relied on European experiences with the intention of picking the best, already tested solutions, and applying them directly—a perfect example of knowledge transfer and Europeanization. This case from 1884 was also important because of timing as, compared to many European cities, the authorities in Belgrade recognized key infrastructure issues and compiled an action plan relatively early. However, the problem of Belgrade's modernization was that more than three decades elapsed between the recognition of these issues and the completion of the plan. From the time Đorđević was removed from office due to political bickering, more than three decades passed without further progress. What happened? What was the problem? These breaks in the modernization process, these obstacles as well as the ways in which modernization was recommenced, decelerated, and eventually stopped, are the foci of this paper.

The twenty-five years (1885–1911) that Belgrade needed to solve most of its infrastructure problems and acquire a quality water supply system, sanitation, and street pavement, did not pass without

¹⁰ “Izveštaj opštinske komisije za proučavanje izvesnih opštinskih ustanova u stranim zemljama (podnesen na sednici odbora opštine beogradske od 29. januara 1885. godine)” (Belgrade: Opština beogradska, 1885).

various initiatives and activities. These questions were discussed on an almost daily basis, tenders for projects were announced, plans and programs were adopted, commissions assembled and dissolved, foreign experts consulted in order to formulate new and “independent” opinions, loans announced, signed, and then broken.¹¹ Contemporaries were well aware of the system’s inefficiency, so they wearily concluded that the cause of the state of affairs should be sought in the “lack of methodical work and logical proceedings.”¹² According to their opinion, “Belgrade acquired one project after another... Whenever a project arrived and was delivered to the authorities for evaluation, many faults were found, which is why the reports were full of complaints and critical remarks, with the outcome that a project was ceremoniously rejected.”¹³ Irrational behavior prevented the development of the city initiated in the 1880s with the Đorđević commission at a time when similar projects were underway in various European capitals. However, soon after work would start, it was stopped because of political conflicts within the city administration. In 1909, more than twenty years after the Đorđević commission, the current mayor had to describe his city in the following words to the city assembly: “[The city is] without order, not paved with modern cobblestones, full of mud and dust, unregulated, without sewage, ill-equipped with water—in one word, lacking everything that could elevate the city to the status of a cultural city.”¹⁴

Politics as a “Brake” of Modernization

Part of the reason for this was strictly political. During the period discussed in this chapter, Belgrade was governed by the political forces opposing those in power at the level of the central state. In the first period, during the rule of the parties who supported the Obrenović dynasty, the city was governed by the Nikola Pašić Radicals, who

¹¹ For more detail, see Stojanović, *Kaldrma i asfalt*.

¹² E. Mihl, “Zašto Beograd još nije kanalisán,” in *Srpski arhiv za celokupno lekarsvo: Organ Srpskog lekarskog društva* (August 1902), 316.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Velislav Vulović, *Opštinski zajam od 60 milijona dinara* (Belgrade: Opština beogradska, 1909).

were close to the Karađorđević dynasty. When these Radicals took over the central government in 1903, almost always Belgrade voted for their main opponents—the Independent Radicals. This division was reflected in continuous conflicts of the capital city with the state authorities. And the capital city was the most highly developed part of the country, so it systematically sided with more liberal, more modern, and more pro-European political options, bringing it in constant opposition to the more traditional and conservative parties that dominated the central government. When mentioning political divisions and their consequences for the modernization processes, one should take into account that in Serbia there was no ordinary democratic conflict of varying interests; rather, the political divisions in local political culture usually meant a “life-or-death” division. In premodern political culture, the “political other” was not perceived as an opponent but as an enemy against whom, as an opposition deputy remarked in the National Assembly, all means were legitimate.¹⁵ This bigotry was one of the factors that led to the blockade of the entire system, because by discrediting opposing opinions as essentially illegitimate, it rendered compromise as a way of conducting politics and making decisions impossible. Compromise with the “enemy” was seen as a weakness, and any deal as morally suspicious behavior. Such an understanding of the political other significantly impeded decision-making due to the almost continuous obstruction by the opposition, and due to the fact that the city and the state were governed by opposing parties. This meant an almost continuous conflict between the city and the state governments and significantly hampered Belgrade’s efforts to create the necessary conditions for development in the National Assembly (from the Law on the City of Belgrade to state loans for infrastructure). These divisions were not specific to Serbia, but the lack of a good and efficient bureaucracy and management system led to political divisions with devastating effects on the overall development. Moreover, the lack of good bureaucracy should be perceived as the effect of the above-mentioned divisions, produced by weak authorities with meager parliamentary majorities. This led to elections almost every other year, which, in the Serbian case, also meant the exchange of almost the entire bureaucracy, thus

¹⁵ Stenografske beleške Narodne skupštine, 1906–1907, 16 April 1907, p. 4361.

burdening the work of administrations with discontinuities that prevented the completion of any project.

If one adds to this a continuity of the model of the party-state in the Serbian political experience, the political context becomes clear. The party-state meant the complete domination of party criteria in decision-making. From personal to legal solutions, it all depended on the particular interests of the party in power. It was the party, not public interest or rule of law that determined the validity and even legitimacy or legality of political actions. The party's interests were placed above all individual or public needs.

This was the consequence of existing political relations and historical developments. In a society where education is the key factor of social mobility, political parties appeared as a new and decisive factor in the acceleration of social mobility and personal promotion. Party membership implied privileges and the possibility to advance and acquire wealth more quickly. The party leaderships and the social composition of the assembly deputies bears witness to the fact that becoming a party member was the springboard, especially when all other possibilities were unavailable: free professions could not secure a strong financial position and there was not enough free capital that could enable social advancement independent of the state.

The city of Belgrade found itself in this trench. Schisms between political parties, between current and previous governments, between the municipal and the central government made it practically impossible to resolve the city's most pressing problems. Even in cases where a solution was adopted on higher levels, it would soon appear that it was far from definitive or unequivocal. If the government changed, all decisions by the previous authorities would be canceled and the decision process would revert to the beginning. In their analyses, experts frequently complained about these conditions: "Our well-known disease is to deny the work and expertise of our predecessors and our political opponents, to always introduce some reform and tear down what others have built, without considering that such an attitude is detrimental for all of us, since the Belgrade municipality is not the property of some political party but belongs to all of us."¹⁶

¹⁶ Jovan Andrejević, *Predlog o kaldrmisanju Beograda* (Belgrade: Opština beogradska, 1911), 5.

Each new government canceled the results of the previous one, even when the decisions were based on competent analyses of highly paid foreign experts. This was one of the reasons that led to the problems increasing with each change in government. The conflicts within the narrow and extremely divided elite of the capital city eventually became so great that the problems could no longer be solved. Each party would identify so strongly with a particular solution that making that solution prevail became a question of life and death for that political group. The most obvious example was the construction of sewage. Between 1896 and 1905 the party blockade led to fierce discussions about the system according to which the sewage would be constructed, and between 1893 and 1905 parties clashed over where the waste was to be disposed: in the Sava River or the Danube River. The parties were divided over these issues, which prevented the introduction of sewage for two decades. In many other cases and in a similar way, this blockade impeded the functioning of divided institutions for several years. The public interest was lost in bickering and arguing; internal conflicts were more important than the common good.

These delays were also the result of frequent changes in unstable city and state governments. Unstable authorities are detrimental for expensive and important long-term reform projects, leading contemporaries to conclude that “with such frequent changes in the municipal government, there can be no continuity, nor can one expect large projects to be accomplished according to any decided plan.”¹⁷ Instability and discontinuity in the work of government authorities, coupled with the traditions of the party state, the rivalry between the political camps, and the strong emphasis on party allegiance, spelled catastrophe.

An opposition paper noted on the eve of the Balkan Wars: “In the Belgrade municipality there is also an outrageous partisanship (a system where party allegiance is the only criterion) ... the most important positions, such as the excise tax manager, municipal attorney, engineers, doctors and others, are held by individuals with only party qualifications. Partisanship has infected the Belgrade

¹⁷ *Prethodni radovi za kanalizaciju* (Belgrade: Opština beogradska, 1910), 20.

municipality, and therefore no project, no matter how much money is sacrificed for it, can be properly completed.”¹⁸

Individuals and the System

Another problem was that in most instances, modernization in Serbia did not depend on institutions or the system, but on personal initiative. Individuals like the aforementioned mayor Vladan Đorđević or other experts, mostly engineers, proposed and initiated numerous modernization projects. They were mostly educated abroad, interestingly enough until the outbreak of World War I primarily at German and Austro-Hungarian universities. The majority (66.4%) of Serbian students studied there, as opposed to just 24.9 percent in countries that were “political allies,” such as France and Russia.¹⁹ They transferred their knowledge as well as modernization and Europeanization matrices to Serbia, which was one of the main catalysts of development. They did this at the time when other European cities were tackling the same issues. The most famous example is that of Đoka Stojković, professor at the University of Belgrade, who as an expert and president of the Commission for Electrification perceived the introduction of electricity as his personal mission.²⁰ Because of his persistence, he survived all attacks by the public and various political agents, managed to overcome all obstacles, and in the end realized his intention that the Edison Electric Society introduce electricity in Belgrade in 1894, which was only one year after Rome, and one year before electricity was introduced in Milan.²¹ This was a moment when Belgrade, just like in the case of the introduction of electric tramways, was in step with Europe.

However, this was largely the consequence of Stojković’s personal efforts. Urbanization, modernization, or Europeanization certainly cannot be individual projects. But, there are many cases in

¹⁸ Napredak, Kalendar za prestupnu 1912. godinu (Belgrade: Napredna stranka, 1912), 119.

¹⁹ Trgovčević, *Planirana elita*, 60.

²⁰ Knežević, “Osvetljenje u Beogradu,” 468.

²¹ Pinol, *Histoire de l’Europe*, 200–203.

Serbia that prove that these developments could be brought about by individuals, and that the whole process quite often depended on their personal strength and perseverance. The introduction of electricity is an example of this. At first, resistance was enormous. Day after day, the press announced that electricity is dangerous, that it introduces disorder among citizens, that the power lines would scar the city, that one could easily die from it, and that people can, if they look at the lightbulbs for a long time, become blind and mute.²² There was also a suspicion that the introduction of electricity prolongs nightlife and hence encourages immoral behavior.²³ Stanojević had enough tenacity to persist in his struggle, but this only proves that too often modernization depended on the strength of an individual to withstand a struggle with a suspicious public, opponents of every hue, and lethargic municipal authorities. Some of the experts could not endure this for long, so sometimes following their withdrawal projects that were already in the official realization phase for many years would simply be abandoned.

This was also the case with the already mentioned example of the development plan by Vladan Đorđević, which was completely abandoned after he was removed from office, only a few months after the plan was to be completed. The same happened following the removal of Mayor Živko Karabiberović in 1889, after the removal of the head of the Engineering Office Toša Selaković in 1894, and of Mayor Nikola Stamenković in 1896. Following the coup d'état in 1903, the newly formed Grašev commission was disbanded.²⁴

Modernization that depends on the perseverance of individuals is irreconcilable with the model of systemic transformation. Moreover, this phenomenon confirms the insufficient institutional development of the system that was quite often constructed in such a way that all the decisions were made by a single person, or a small circle of his collaborators. Such an undemocratic, almost conspiratorial power system leads to significant and long-term discontinuities in the development process, as changes in power lead to breaks in the projects in which the previous power holders were involved.

²² *Večernje novosti*, 27 November 1893.

²³ *Večernje novosti*, 12 October 1894.

²⁴ For more detail, see Stojanović, *Kaldrma i asfalt*, 156–60.

Plans and Laws

Such lack of will and efficacy in the managerial structure led to infrastructure projects that were implemented without previous planning and schedule. I have already mentioned that all the debates on infrastructure development unfolded and all the projects were carried out prior to the adoption of the Law on the City of Belgrade and without urban planning, which were adopted only after World War I, when the majority of the projects were already completed. Because of the importance of planned development, I now turn to the history of unsuccessful attempts to introduce legal and city planning regulations in Belgrade, as these are telling examples of the antimodern activities of the elites.

The first attempt to legally regulate the capital city followed the creation of the first city plan by Emilijan Joksimović in 1867. The proposed law stipulated that “the city of Belgrade and its surroundings should be measured, and a system of general regulation set up.”²⁵ The law was not adopted, and further development proceeded without any regulation. Almost two decades had gone by before the next attempt. The Law on Municipalities was adopted in 1885, providing a great impetus for city planning. This law suffocated the city’s development, as it was a general law that regulated the basic urban problems of all Serbian towns, from smallest city to the capital. Deputies of the Belgrade city assembly were well aware of the impediments of such a law, so they demanded a change: “The main reason for inactivity lies in the Law on Municipalities, which is assigned to large cities as well as to the smallest municipality, so one has to struggle with numerous obstacles that slow down the work of committees and the court.”²⁶ However, this condition remained unchanged for the next forty years.

The 1896 Building Law for Belgrade was an important step in regulating construction, but some of its key solutions actually impeded the city’s development. Even though city deputies constantly warned of this, demanding that this law be modernized, the new one

²⁵ Čubrilović, *Istorija Beograda*, II, 309.

²⁶ Arhiv grada Beograda, *Zapisnici sa sednica odbora opštine grada Beograda*, 1905, vol. I, 25 January 1905, no. 52.

was not adopted until after World War I.²⁷ This is an example of how Belgrade fell victim to the competition between the municipality and the state, for the state assembly was supposed to adopt the Law on the City of Belgrade, which was systematically delayed. Deputies discussed this openly, forcing Vojislav Marinković, a member of the opposition Progressive Party who was also a city assembly deputy, to explain why the law was not adopted: “The Law on the City of Belgrade has its political segments, and as this commission [which was entrusted with the law’s formulation] includes all political groups that cannot agree to elect one man to complete this job, the job could not be finished fast enough.”²⁸

The issue was presented again a year later, but political divisions continued to prevent any progress. The city mayor had to respond to the question concerning the law’s fate in the same way as the year before: “Members of the commission disagree about the basics of this law, so they did nothing.”²⁹ The same situation ensued again in 1911 and in 1914, when the newly elected municipality city mayors presented the law’s adoption as a top priority in their inaugural speeches. However, the law was not adopted until the inter-war period. As a result, the history of the “never adopted” Law on the City of Belgrade remains one of the paradigmatic stories of Serbian history. Administrations were too weak to overcome the consequences of political divisions. Conversely, these political divisions prevented the creation of a more stable, more operational, and stronger administration. This was another “enchanted circle of Serbian modernization.”

The history of city planning was similar. In this case, Belgrade also started “on time” with the first plan in 1867³⁰. However, even

²⁷ Nedić, “Urbanističko uređenje,” 202.

²⁸ Arhiva grada Beograda, *Zapisnici*, 1906, IV, 6 October 1906, no. 1003.

²⁹ Arhiva grada Beograda, *Zapisnici*, 1907, I, 23 January 1907, no. 103.

³⁰ The first public calls for the regulation and planning of certain parts of the city were already published in the 1840s in Vienna; Haussmann’s plans for the renewal of Paris were initiated in 1851; Barcelona followed suit in 1859; Berlin followed soon as well; Rome began its planned development in 1873; Sweden declared mandatory urban planning by law in 1874; Bulgaria followed after it was granted autonomy in 1878, and the Netherlands in 1901. Pinol, *Histoire de l’Europe*, 143.

though it was initiated on time, in Belgrade city planning was adopted, after many clashes, only in 1923, a full fifty-six years after the first visionary suggestion by Emilijan Joksimović. However, the ensuing urban plans, just like the Law on the City of Belgrade, fell victim to political divisions and party bickering. Some of the plans were adopted, but none were actually implemented until the introduction of the City Plan in 1923. Until then, the city developed without a general plan, inchoately, and without projecting future development needs. Members of the Society of Serbian Engineers and Architects and the journal *Srpski tehnicki list* (Serbian Technical Magazine) warned the municipality that before the implementation of comprehensive projects it is necessary to devise a general plan, as otherwise one could reach a situation in which “all the money provided for the regulation of Belgrade is spent, and Belgrade is neither a nice nor a comfortable town.”³¹

This was one of the major causes that slowed down development, creating a city planning chaos that as time went by demanded the increasing expenditure of energy and money in order to correct what had previously been done wrong. This led to the uneven development of different parts of the city and to its unregulated expansion. In forty years (between 1867 and 1906), the city limits of Belgrade expanded five times, which was in line with the urban explosion in Europe at the time.³² However, something very different happened in the case of Belgrade: people fled the city center because of the high prices of building land. Houses were built outside the city limits as illegal objects that could be financially covered (the price of land in the city was 6 dinars per square meter, while outside the city limits it was 2 dinars). This resulted in the center of Belgrade being deserted and neglected, and unregulated building along its fringes, which, in the long run, made regulating the city even more expensive and placed an additional strain on the city finances. Contemporaries bitterly remarked: “Belgrade is practically being depopulated. Those who build structures outside the city limits do not have to obey the Building Law. In just the last ten

³¹ “Rezolucija Udruženja srpski hinžinjera i tehničara,” quoted in Maksimović, *Ideje i stvarnost*, 36.

³² Pinol, *Histoire de l'Europe*, 23.

years, Belgrade has expanded fivefold, a process that will cost us dearly, as there are so many empty plots of land in the city, and the municipal plots are difficult to sell. The authorities should finally put an end to this depopulation of Belgrade.”³³

Paradoxically, the increase in size additionally slowed down the city’s development: the center remained scarcely populated, especially compared to other big European cities. In 1900 there were 92 people per acre in Belgrade, compared 600 in London, 378 in Paris, and 110 in Hamburg. This meant that there were 110 square meters of space per capita in Belgrade.³⁴ Certainly this did not mean that Belgrade’s citizens enjoyed more comfort. City assembly deputies noted: “The great space is impossible to maintain or channel in an easy or clean way, which is something that we urgently need.”³⁵

The contest for the General City Plan was published only in 1921 and the jury consisted of famous experts from France and Switzerland. It stipulated that prewar Belgrade had taken an uneven development and that it needed a “rational plan” to correct the previous mistakes. The final plan was compiled by combining solutions from twenty competing projects. The plan improved the capital city’s conditions by creating many boulevards and representative spaces needed by a more ambitious and much larger country—Yugoslavia. Still, the architects dealing with the issue concluded that the situation was not much improved from pre–World War I conditions: “Belgrade lost a lot due to the fact that both the state and the municipality, and many state institutions, not only did not help in implementing the General Plan, but in almost two decades prevented the realization of main ideas on the city’s transformation according to contemporary city planning principles through their negative attitudes.”³⁶

The political elite demonstrated the same irresponsibility in the case of the Loan for the City of Belgrade. This story is also paradigmatic. In this case, political debates also lasted several dec-

³³ Arhiv grada Beograda, *Zapisnici*, 1903, I, 21 March 1903, no. 238.

³⁴ In Paris it was 30 square meters, in Berlin 24.2, in Vienna 23, in Rome 18.6, and in Copenhagen 24. Pinol, *Histoire de l’Europe*, 23.

³⁵ Pavle Zorić, “Lepa varoš,” in *Srpski književni glasnik*, vol. VII (1907), 323–65, 357.

³⁶ Maksimović, “Urbanistički razvoj Beograda,” 153–72, 166.

ades—from 1883, when the issue was first mentioned, until 1905, when the city received its first important investment. But even this loan was approved based on the plan conceived ten years earlier, so it did not meet the actual needs of the city, which had evolved in the meantime. The issue of financing major infrastructure work was only resolved in 1911.

Just like in previous cases, the political context impeded development. With the general lack of capital, banks, as an important segment of the party-state, were tied to political parties. Therefore, any debate about loans, including the ones for Belgrade, was essentially a conflict about financial and political power. The last phase of delays about loans was marked by this conflict. The Radicals, who had the majority in the National Assembly, wanted the loan to come from the Fund Management, and the Independents, who were in power in Belgrade and controlled the National Bank, insisted that the loan be taken from there. In order to obstruct the Independents, the then Radical minister of engineering obstructed the approval of the state guarantee necessary for the loan until 1911. When the loan was finally approved, major projects were completed within a mere two years. This example shows how financial issues could have been solved without the many problems encountered along the way if only there had been political consensus about development priorities. This was the most obvious example of the obstruction of development by the elite.

The Permanence of Temporary Solutions

At the same time, this type of work and building produced shabby results and a multiplication of so-called temporary objects, which until today burden even the city center. Political compromises led to changes in previously made plans, and they are still present in the strange curves of the capital's streets. This is how contemporaries have ironically described the affect of corruption on urban matters: "The direction of streets is nowhere carried out in a nice and perspective way. Illogical breaks, narrowing, broadening, and winding are ubiquitous. The first project for city streets was derived logically, and the streets were straight. Then, as time went by, any

powerful proprietor could curve a street according to his will, asking the Minister of buildings in charge that the street should follow a direction that suits his own personal interests ... Our Ministers of buildings dealt with the curving of main streets in the capital. Their frequent changes and guesses from the ministerial ‘padded chairs’ can easily be counted by counting the windings and breaks of the capital city’s streets.”³⁷ The issue of road construction below is indicative of yet another difficulty in Belgrade’s urban development—the proper sequence of infrastructure projects.

Temporary solutions were often consequences of political compromises. When feuding parties would reach an agreement after many years, or even decades, it was again at the expense of the capital city and its citizens. The solution was usually desultory—some proposals from both sides would be combined in an incredible patchwork. If the compromise between the parties in conflict was impossible, the ruling party would declare a solution, but as the pressures from the opposing political group became too strong, the solution would be a temporary one, made of the cheapest and least solid materials, in order to last until consensus. That is how a number of central streets and public buildings came into being.

Another cause of temporariness was that, after several decades spent on conflicts over certain topics, a decision would be reached, but based on the original project. In the meantime, the city had developed, so the project agreed upon no longer corresponded to reality. This was also the case with the city limits, which were debated for twenty years. When a solution was finally reached, it was based on the original proposal from 1885, but of course the city had grown in the meantime, so several thousands of people remained outside the city limits. A few years later, the limits had to be changed again. This problem also pertained to waterways and sewage: debates went on for years about the original project, and when a decision was finally reached, it no longer suited the city or its increased population. Sometimes these temporary solutions were justified by the lack of funds and the necessity to “plug a hole in the city,” which is best witnessed by the history of Belgrade streets. Temporary solutions reflected relations between the players, their

³⁷ Zorić, “Lepa varoš,” 362.

strategies, conflicts over power, carelessness, and the irrational spending of time, money, and energy.

As time went by, temporary solutions became permanent but not definitive. This impeded the city's development, as it was another reason that the essential urban problems remained unsolved. Occasionally, city authorities went back to numerous temporary solutions only to replace them with new or even older temporary solutions. There was an impression that people worked all the time while essentially everything went around in circles. This waste of energy became part of the system characterized, as the opposition Progressive Party Calendar of 1912 noted, by "beginning after beginning, sloppy beginnings."³⁸

Irrational Sequences

Numerous cases illustrate other ways of abandoning the necessary order in planning and working, which additionally slowed down the functioning of the whole system. A good example is provided by the history of Belgrade streets,³⁹ which shows constant deviation from a rational order, leading to the streets not being properly paved, uncomfortable for pedestrians and cars alike, while the possibilities to bring the streets into a decent hygienic condition decreased with time. The first issue that blocked the organization of streets was determining the city limits. During the two decades it took the city assembly to determine Belgrade's city limits, many efforts were postponed, waiting for the final delimitation to determine which streets were going to be paved, which lit, where water supply and sewage would be placed, and the extent of the protection of the city gendarmerie. Despite the fact that this issue determined many others, the delimitation kept being postponed. The authorities could not make up their minds on whether to include quarters that were produced by illegal building on the outskirts into the city limits (which would significantly increase the municipality's expenditures), or to delimit the city much more narrowly

³⁸ Napredak. Kalendar za prestupnu 1912. godinu, 118.

³⁹ Stojanović, "Orte der Veränderung," 65–81.

around the organized center. The latter would leave a great number of inhabitants without proper living conditions, which would make the future inclusion of these suburbs much more expensive. Nevertheless, even though the dilemma was not easy to resolve, its postponement only brought new problems to both the citizens and the municipality.

Years went by as the municipal authorities tried to solve another problem: whether to invest more funds into the permanent regulation of central city streets⁴⁰ or to invest the available money into the constant patching of the greater city area without a definitive organization of the main and representative traffic ways.⁴¹ Until the early 1920s, the second solution prevailed, so the city center remained disorganized while the money was irrationally spent on the constant fixing of the same streets, which did not lead to any progress in the city organization.

Work on street pavement was also slowed down by an eternal dilemma resulting from the undetermined priorities schedule and order of infrastructure projects: whether to organize streets and then dig them up again when the time came to install sewage or to wait with the street organization until the completion of the canals.⁴² In the end, no coherent solution was reached, so some streets had to wait several decades for the sewage to be completed first, while others were first renewed and then dug up again after only a few years in order to set up the pipes, which doubled the costs. These dilemmas were compounded by the lack of finances to support these projects. Ultimately, however, the main problem was not the complexity or extent of the necessary efforts or the lack of funding, but the unsystematic nature of the work, as most time and energy was wasted on futile discussions of dilemmas that, in the end, appeared irresolvable.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 47–76.

⁴² For more detail, see Stojanović, *Kaldrma i asfalt*, 149–67.

Resistance to Modernization

The weak functioning of the system necessarily led to machinations that eventually depleted the city finances, demotivated experts, and irritated citizens. This led to the constant reproduction of an archaic order of things, which, in order to function, necessarily produced increasing anarchy by breaking rules that were not even yet in place. Hence the establishment of any system at all raised suspicion, and any attempt to establish rules was perceived as violence by the government and produced resistance.⁴³ As time went by, this resistance against rules turned into a resistance toward political and social change per se. It was frequently articulated as resistance to modernization and Europeanization, to development processes based on the setting and respecting of clear rules.

Here I return to the analysis of the wrong order of large-scale projects in Belgrade. Even in cases where projects were completed, it was done in a completely irrational manner. The most prominent example is the interplay between the introduction of electricity⁴⁴ and the introduction of sewage. It would be logical to first construct the sewage system, as it is essential for the more hygienic and healthier life of citizens. Furthermore, a number of other infrastructure improvements depend on sewage, such as the possibility to erect multistoried buildings or the functioning of the water supply system. Still, Belgrade was equipped with electricity twenty years before sewage installation. This example best serves to repudiate the claim of some historians that a lack of finances was the only obstacle for modernization in Serbia. On the contrary, it again proves that at the heart of the problem was the unsystematic and unplanned nature of work, as the introduction of electricity was an expensive and risky business.

The sewage system is paradigmatic for the controversies surrounding the modernization of Belgrade.⁴⁵ Like other efforts, this issue arose in 1885, at a time when similar decisions were being

⁴³ On resistance to modernization, see Perović, *Od anarhije*, and note 1.

⁴⁴ For more detail, see Stojanović, “Šine u kaldrimi,” 289–305.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

reached in for example Frankfurt and many Swiss cities. However, Belgrade installed its sewage system only in 1911, and even then it was not connected to houses. Even though these were the most expensive efforts, an analysis of the reasons for their delay shows that a lack of finances was not even discussed. Time was lost for a variety of reasons. Occasionally, much more time was spent on the work of different commissions that were supposed to approve projects than on the realization of the project itself. As described above, important reasons for this were the dependence of specific projects on individual initiative or personal power, competition between political opponents, the often short terms of authorities in office, and a tendency of the new authorities to cancel and reverse all previous efforts.

The analysis of causes for these constant delays points to deeper systemic problems. The biggest problem was that precise and rational reasons had the least value in decision-making and that a number of extraprofessional motives influenced decision-making—from personal interests to party envy, from professional vanity to the incapacity to take responsibility, from the thirst for vengeance against political opponents to the wish to annihilate everything done previously. All these factors influenced the decision-making process much more strongly than professional or financial reasons. And it produced a constant division of all the institutions and commissions aligned with feuding groups that refused to desert “their side” under any circumstances. The war that for years was fought according to the principle “one commission against the other” or “one report against another” fragmented problems even further, almost losing the essence of the problem and citizens’ essential needs. As time went by, these games between various interest groups became an end in themselves, and fighting over details became the essence of the disagreement. This was an expression of the elite’s impotence to respond to the challenges it faced in the key years of the modernization process.

The capital of Serbia entered modernization processes in an irrational way. The basis for this was an attempt to compensate for backwardness by skipping some development phases, by, for example, introducing the latest technical achievements, used at the time in building the infrastructure of the most developed European

capitals. As put by the historian Dimitrije Đorđević, it was like putting an airplane engine onto a cart drawn by oxen.⁴⁶

It turned out that isolated instances of modernization could not drag along the whole. As they most often appeared with no comprehensive plan or systematic solution, these instances remained lonely, disconnected, and unregulated in a broader context. In many cases (from modernized individual state institutions to specific infrastructure measures), over time there was a regression, a loss of the modernizing impulse, and even a cancelation of the achieved results. It could be compared to the mixing of oil and water: modernization was limited to narrow circles that could not spread to the whole society, remaining isolated and clearly demarcated from the prevailing undeveloped society.⁴⁷

Serbia was not the only country that wished to skip some phases in its development. Many societies thought that one could speed up history. However, during its development Serbia all too often reversed the stream of modernization.⁴⁸ This is something that should be studied in greater detail, and we should also look for the causes of such actions. One of them is that in the two centuries of its modern history, Serbia did not attain the essential experience of democratic governance.⁴⁹ This does not mean that there were no democratic periods of government, or at least brave attempts at it. There were, however, no regular changes of government through elections, which is the key principle for introducing responsibility, disciplining authorities, and constructing a framework that they accept, whether they like it or not, in order to gain voters' sympathies. In the last two centuries of Serbian history, we see a dominance of authoritarian types of government, which, by definition, did not care about public opinion. But even in brief and rare moments of democratic governments, authorities did not face the danger that voters would remove them from power. Changes always came from different circles of conspirators. This practice did not introduce the principle of responsibility into politics—on the contrary, it rein-

⁴⁶ Đorđević, *Ogledi iz balkanske*.

⁴⁷ Stojanović, *Ulje na vodi*.

⁴⁸ Perović, *Od anarhije do autokratije*, 110–20.

⁴⁹ Popović-Obradović, *Parlamentarizam u Srbiji*.

forced the principle of behind-the-scenes and extrainstitutional activities without any public control.⁵⁰ The lack of regular changes through electoral processes supported irresponsible government, which did not feel obliged to render an account for time wasted, or for public money irrationally spent.

One of the reasons for this was the fact that Serbia did not have a middle class, which would in its own interests delimit and control the state, and hold it accountable. City dwellers comprised just 13 percent of Serbia's overall population, and the urban population was composed of small merchants, craftsmen, and, mostly, state bureaucrats. There was little free capital, and it was mostly controlled by the banks allied with political parties. There was hardly any industry or other, more powerful social strata independent of the state. This was the decisive factor that, in the Western democracies' experiences, pushed the state toward a minimally liberal government—a service for the citizens. The thin and financially insufficiently powerful civic stratum in Serbia did not have that power. It did construct a network of civil society institutions comparable to European ones,⁵¹ but they had no power to set clear limits for the authorities. Parties were formed just a few years after the first modern parties were founded in Great Britain, there was an excellent and high-quality press, there were several hundreds of citizens' associations, but all of this did not succeed in bringing about a deep social and political turn. There was no strong citizenry to back up numerous different and quite modern civil society institutions.

Their weakness in size and insufficient financial capabilities made them dependent on the state.⁵² Those who, due to their advanced education, possessed some authority were, because of financial troubles and the meager possibilities to earn enough money in free professions, forced to work for the state, which limited their possibilities for action.⁵³ Those who could have developed an independent financial position based on their entrepreneurship were inclined toward collaboration with political parties or the state it-

⁵⁰ Stojanović, *Srbija i demokratija*.

⁵¹ Stojanović, *Kaldrma i asfalt*, 237–81.

⁵² For more detail, see Čalić, *Socijalna istorija Srbije*.

⁵³ Đorđević, "Srpsko društvo," 125–36.

self, which in the weak market were the only actors capable of securing access to the best-paid positions. The lack of free capital forced even those social strata that were in the Western experience carriers of social and political transformation into collaboration with and even dependence on the state. Under these conditions, there was no force in society that would out of economic interest force the state into responsible, rational, and efficacious management. Hence the state, even when democratic, did not care much about its citizens.

All these examples show that success in reforming society is, regardless of the cost, primarily dependent on the will of the social and political elite to set out on the course of reforms, and consensus in society to maintain this course. This leads us to the key question: Was the Serbian elite the initiator or the brakeman of modernization?⁵⁴ Historians generally assume that the social elite and the state itself is the main initiator of social reform in undeveloped societies. However, the examples analyzed here show that the modernization of Belgrade (and Serbia more generally) was obstructed by the elite. Just like in many other cases studied and analyzed by Serbian historian Latinka Perović and Marie-Janine Čalić, German South-East European history expert it appears that during the history of the city covered in this book, the elite dictated the measure of reforms and was responsible for the slow pace and limitedness of these reforms.⁵⁵ This conclusion could question the thesis that the main reason for Serbia's slow modernization lies in the fact that its elite did not have enough power to drag the slow agrarian society into the change process. On the contrary, there are many examples that prove that this very elite, deliberately or not, kept Serbian society underdeveloped.⁵⁶ It did so primarily by not making any effort to create a systematic development plan and necessary framework for transformation, leaving the development partial, which, as in the case of Belgrade, gradually brought about isolated instances of modernization, but forfeited the potential to reform the rest of the society. The same conclusion can be reached by analyzing the legis-

⁵⁴ Perović, *Srbija u modernizacijskim procesima*, 3.

⁵⁵ Stojanović, "Rural against Urban."

⁵⁶ Čalić, *Socijalna istorija Srbije*.

lature, which, especially in regard to society, blocked changes. From the laws regulating agriculture, crafts, and trade to the ones that, like the Civil Code, regulated relations within society, they all tended to obstruct rather than foster development.

Apart from all this, the Serbian elite continuously forced some real or imaginary priorities, posing them as the question of all questions on which, it was argued, everything depended, and without the resolution of which nothing could be solved. During the nineteenth century, it was first acquiring independence and then, until 1918, an obsession with something called “liberation and unification.” Later, during the twentieth century, there were problems resulting from the complexity and controversies of the Yugoslav state, only to return to the resolution of the national question toward the end of the century, as the priority without which one could not move toward the transition from communism to modern society. These were all real problems, but their resolution, difficult in many cases, was construed as a precondition for considering any other issue—from democratization to economic and social transformation. Expecting the resolution of these “questions of all questions,” everything could be postponed, thus relieving the elite of responsibility for “inaction.” At the same time, this was the best way to preserve an authoritarian government, for each one acquired its authority by presenting itself as the one that would resolve “the question.” This provided a *carte blanche* to oppress different opinions, at least until “the question” was solved.

What were the reasons that induced authorities to block the development of society? Despite the diverse authorities in the course of the past two centuries, the results they achieved were similar. They did not free society of forced restraints or allow a free development toward greater social stratification. Is it possible to claim that such a development was not in the interest of the various authorities that ruled Serbia? This issue should be studied further, especially by going back to the Stenographic Notes of the National Assembly as historical sources that best bear witnesses to the conscious efforts to prevent changes. However, even this study provides enough arguments for such a conclusion. Various parts of the elite had an interest in preventing real modernization. For the intellectuals, it would mean competition; for the thin layer of entrepre-

neurs, it would mean the narrowing of an already narrow market; for the church, it would mean the abolition of its political role, which was in any case inappropriate for a modern society; for the army, which is under civil control in transformed societies, it would mean the end of a privileged and influential political position; finally, for the authorities, it would mean the end of authoritarian, uncontrolled, irresponsible, and corrupt activities. This does not mean that all the elites that came to power were antireform, but it appears that soon after coming to power they lost their modernizing impetus in light of the many advantages of governing an underdeveloped society. This is not a matter of historical destiny or ominous determinism, and it is not the predestination of underdeveloped societies to “reassert” their backwardness from time to time. As the first independent state in the Balkans, Serbia had the chance to become the engine of the entire region. However, it forfeited this chance. Its development was, and to a great extent still is, a victim of the “union of the elites” that saw Serbia’s development as a danger to their positions of power.

8. Architectural Praxis in Sofia: The Changing Perception of Oriental Urbanity and European Urbanism, 1879–1940

Elitza Stanoeva

Sofia became Bulgaria's national capital in March 1879, a year after the country's emancipation from the Ottoman Empire.¹ This structured the agenda of urban development in accordance with the higher objective of nation state building. During the post-Ottoman decades, the constellation of architectural landmarks epitomizing modern urbanism was constructed simultaneously with the political and cultural institutions of modern statehood. In the historical context of newly gained statehood, the creation of a representative appearance for the national capital was a priority of urban reconstruction envisaged as a symbolic manifestation of national sovereignty.

The analysis presented in this chapter reveals how strongly technocratic discourse and practice, namely architectural production, was conditioned by ideological incentives and aspirations on the level of national identity building, which it also opportunistically instrumentalized. It traces the changing visions of Oriental and European urbanity as they informed and molded the monumental architectural projects in Sofia, and as they became entangled with the shifting notions of a modern city advocated by the professional community of Bulgarian urbanists and architects. Building modernity at home, Bulgarian graduates of European polytechnics were

¹ I am grateful to Manuel Tröster for the thorough reading and comments on this chapter. The translations of Bulgarian quotes in the text are mine.

inspired by the images of modernness they had absorbed abroad, mainly in Austria-Hungary, France, and Russia. Thus, Paris and Vienna, Berlin and St. Petersburg haunted their imaginations and, in effect, were mirrored in monumental ensembles in the new cityscape of Sofia. Accordingly, Bulgarian architecture embraced neo-classicism with its symbolic charge of reviving a centuries-old European cultural tradition. With a much more limited material reverberation on the representative appearance of the capital city, secession and constructivism also made their way into the artistic glossary of Bulgarian architects.

My analysis emphasizes the transfer of knowledge from the West and the replication and reworking of foreign trends. As in the neighboring countries that had achieved their autonomy from the Ottoman Empire earlier, this transfer was conditioned by a political imagery conceptualizing modernity as a European culture's attribute, consequently striving for modernization with a distinctive European veneer.² Those trends were adopted initially directly and uncritically along the lines of internationalism in architectural production, and later indirectly under a chauvinist guise along the lines of a search for national cultural authenticity. The path that Bulgarian architectural praxis followed was in no way unique, but it rather reflected the general spirit that shaped the epoch politically as well as culturally, and especially the waning cosmopolitanism and the growing crisis of international cooperation in the interwar period.

Between the Orient and Europe, 1879–1900

In the immediate post-Ottoman period, the political identity of the Bulgarian state was caught between the value poles of the detested Ottoman past and a desired European future. The tension between the Oriental legacy and the aspiration for all things European was embedded in the ambiguous legal status of the newly formed Principality of Bulgaria as defined by the great powers in the 1878 Peace Treaty of Berlin: a constitutional monarchy, yet a vassal principality of the Ottoman Empire under a nine-month Provisional

² See the chapters by Eleni Bastéa and Dubravka Stojanović in this volume.

Russian Administration. Within this political context, the transformation of Sofia into a modern capital city served the purpose of cultural Europeanization heralding the country's divorce from the Ottoman Empire and its true belonging to Europe. The splintering polarization of the two cultural models was already spearheaded in the agenda of the Provisional Russian Administration, whose guidelines were "to sow the seeds of a new nationality rooted in the Christian teaching of love for your fellow men and in the respect of human rights, on the grounds studded and soaked with the victims of Muslim fanaticism, arbitrariness, and centuries-old oppression," as reads the general instruction of the Russian tsar Alexander II to his imperial commissar in Bulgaria.³

The parallel processes of political and urban modernization that shaped the building of the Bulgarian capital were guided by the transfer of knowledge and practices of European modernity, which was embraced as a normative model for emulation by the newly established state. The administrative and cultural reforms of implementing new public institutions were closely followed by architectural visualizations of the novel principles of governance and standards of social life, embellishing the city center of Sofia as a showcase of European statehood and culture. The modernization endeavors coupled with the subversion of the Oriental legacy, which within the anti-Ottoman casuistry connoted a wide array of undesirable urban qualities such as "unhealthy," "disorderly," and "underdeveloped," all of which were perceived as structural ingredients of the preceding foreign domination.⁴

This transformation strongly affected the professional realm of public and private construction. The technization of architecture and urbanism for the purposes of modern city building implied standardization of the building types as well as standardization of construction skills and of the procedures that qualified knowledge as expertise.⁵ Because the extensive construction taking place

³ Georgiev et al., *Istoriya na balgarite*, 18.

⁴ The intricacies of this process of de-Ottomanization are discussed in much more detail in chapter 1 of my dissertation. Stanoeva, *Sofia: The Socialist City*, 78–100.

⁵ Slavova, "Metamorfozi na stroitelniya protses," 206–25.

across the national territory could not be carried out by the few trained local cadres, the state and municipal authorities employed foreign specialists, mostly Austrians, Hungarians, Germans, and Czechs, to draw the general city plans and the architectural designs for the representational buildings meant to become urban landmarks.

As early as 1879, an integrative master plan of Sofia was drawn, whose rationale was to correct the Ottoman city layout of twisting cul-de-sacs into a replica of European town-planning, with straight and wide Haussmannian boulevards. In reality, however, the reconstruction of the capital followed the forked path of a dual city model. The lack of a detailed city cadastre⁶ and the ensuing legal disadvantage of authorities in lawsuits, especially given the opposition of the local population to the rearrangement of their neighborhoods, were a strong factor in the arbitrary reduction of the planning enterprise and its evasion of the socially cohesive spatial enclaves. Furthermore, the financial calculation was the coping stone in assessing the plan's merits: when economizing was feasible, the Sofia City Council ratified modifications of the plan's parameters free-handedly—for example, deflecting entire streets to avoid the expenses of leveling the road surface.⁷

In this situation, the eastern part of Sofia with predominantly Turkish quarters, which were largely depopulated during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878, effectively became a (de)construction site. The demolition of abandoned houses opened up terrains for the development of a modern central district and provided free lumber for the public buildings in demand. By the end of 1878, at least fifty houses had disappeared in the absence of their legal owners.⁸ Along with Turkish houses, Muslim public buildings, most notably mosques,

⁶ Marko Ivanov, "Kadastralno-regulachnite planove na Sofiya do dnes" (The cadastral-regulation plans of Sofia up to now), *Serdika* 6 (1937): 10–14, 10.

⁷ "City Municipal Administration of Sofia: Protocol 39, 21/06/1879," DA-Sofia, f. 1K, op. 1, a.e. 22, l. 32.

⁸ In 1878, there were 3,306 houses in Sofia. "A List of houses in Sofia by mahalle with indication of their value, profitability and general condition," DA-Sofia, f. 1K, op. 1, a.e. 14. An earlier census in Sofia neighborhoods the same year indicates that 315 houses and 441 workshops had Turkish owners. "Register of the population of Sofia in 1878 by mahalles," DA-Sofia, f. 1K, op. 2, a.e. 1727, l. 99.

were systematically destroyed. The Ottoman statistical data indicate the existence of forty-four mosques in Sofia prior to the liberation of Bulgaria;⁹ in 1878, however, due to the destructions during the Russo-Turkish War, only twenty-three mosques survived.¹⁰ In the following years, some of them, which originally had been churches, underwent a secondary conversion and were reestablished as Christian sanctuaries, whereas others were put to secular use as warehouses and prisons, among other functions.¹¹ The last large-scale demolition of mosques took place during the mayor's term of Dimitar Petkov (1888–1893)—a participant in the Bulgarian voluntary units during the Russo-Turkish War and afterward a zealous fighter against the Ottoman heritage—when on his personal initiative most mosques were destroyed in the course of one night.¹² The only remaining mosque, Banya Bashi, the major mosque of Ottoman Sofia, preserved its religious function only because its ownership was contractually bound to Bulgarian property rights in Istanbul. However, as early as 1878, the precincts of the mosque were reclaimed as a sacred Christian place through the restoration of the altar of a destroyed church that had been found in the mosque courtyard and, later the same year, the altar was consecrated as a ceremonial pinnacle of the welcoming celebration for the returning Bulgarian exiles banished in earlier times by the Ottoman authorities.¹³

However, the Ottoman urban legacy was not always erased but was often appropriated due to the pressing practical need of premises for the new institutions of the nation state. From 1880 to 1882, the largest public building in Sofia—the seat of the former Ottoman regional administration—was transformed into a palace for the Bulgarian ruler. The thorough renovation was executed by foreign

⁹ Kiradzhiev, *Sofiya 1878–1943*, 16.

¹⁰ “Register of the population of Sofia in 1878 by mahalles,” DA-Sofia, f. 1K, op. 2, a.e. 1727.

¹¹ For more details on the conversion of mosques, see Stanoeva, “Interpretations of the Ottoman Urban Legacy,” 219.

¹² On the authoritative acts characterizing his mandate, see Stanoeva, *Sofia: The Socialist City*, 107–109.

¹³ “City Administrative Council of Sredets: Protocol 6, 3/03/1878”; “City Administrative Council of Sredets: Protocol 7, 10/03/1878,” DA-Sofia, f. 1K, op. 1, a.e. 21, l. 3–4.

specialists under the direction of the Austrian architect Viktor Rumpelmayer, who was appointed chief royal architect. The building was expanded and its simple architectural appearance was refashioned in renaissance style enriched with neo-baroque ornaments. As further attachment of European luster, the interior decoration was based on patterns from the Palace of Versailles that were sent as a gift by the president of the French Republic.¹⁴ Another symbolically significant transformation was the demolition of the adjacent Çelebi Mosque as detachment from the Ottoman legacy. Subsequently, a ceremonial square was constructed on the site of the destroyed mosque and named “Alexander” in a gesture of gratitude to the Russian tsar.¹⁵

As a visual representation of state sovereignty, the palace became a center of gravity within Sofia’s topography of prestige and also the symbolic divider between the old inner city and the new European district emerging in the former Turkish precinct. The reconstruction of the palace and its new physiognomy had a tremendous impact on the emergent bourgeois consumer taste, thus becoming a model of mimicry for affluent individual mansions. In this architectural economy of imported European luxury, the trademark of its natives set the standard in the valorization of architectural practice: hence, in the realm of high society private housing, most prospering was the Austrian freelance architect Friedrich Grünanger, who was engaged in the palace’s reconstruction and, upon its completion, stayed in Sofia for many years.¹⁶

The central axis of the prestigious district starting at the palace—former Istanbul St. (Tsarigradska) symptomatically renamed to Tsar Liberator Boulevard (Tsar Osvoboditel)—obtained the function of a representational façade of the capital city. In 1884, the other emblem of Bulgarian statehood, the National Assembly, was erected at the far end of the boulevard. This neo-renaissance building was designed by Konstantin Jovanović, who was also the architect of the parliamentary building in Belgrade. On Tsar Osvoboditel

¹⁴ Anton Razsukanov, “Sofiyskiyat dvorets” (Sofia’s palace), *Serdika* 2 (1937): 3–7, 5–6.

¹⁵ Stanoeva, “The Central City Square,” 289.

¹⁶ Yokimov, “Individualnoto bogato zhilishte,” 74.

Boulevard, halfway between the palace and the parliament, the two epitomes of the newly devised political system of Bulgaria, the building of the Military Club was completed in 1900 based on the design of the Czech architect Adolf Václav Kolář. This building was also emblematic for the nation state being a seat of the Bulgarian officers who were deliberately transformed, through social engineering, into the noble estate in a country devoid of old local aristocracy.

Along the modern boulevard, the foreign diplomatic corps concentrated as a sign of the legitimate standing of the newly formed nation state in the arena of international politics. Not only the creation of modern statehood, but also the advent of various attributes of European modernity could be charted in the prestigious new city quarter around the palace where they left their architectural imprints in correspondingly European art styles. The first year of the capital city, 1879, also witnessed the birth of telegraph and postal services in independent Bulgaria, of the first newspaper printed in Sofia, and of the establishment of a national bank system. By the turn of the twentieth century, these pillars of a modern state had their headquarters in the immediate vicinity of Tsar Osvooboditel Boulevard: the Viennese architect Friedrich Schwanberg designed the neo-classical building of the State Printing Office; the Swiss Heinrich Mayer designed the baroque structure of the National Bank; and Yordan Milanov, a Bulgarian graduate from Vienna, drafted the plan of the Central Post Office. In 1878, the Bulgarian Literary Society (the predecessor of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences), established a decade earlier in Romania, moved to Sofia and, soon thereafter, was also granted an estate on the boulevard.

By the last decade of the nineteenth century, a growing number of Bulgarian architects and engineers familiar with modern construction standards due to their education at foreign polytechnics (see Table 8.1) entered the scene of Sofia's modernization and brought new stakes into it.¹⁷ Their foreign diplomas underwent legalization by the Ministry of Public Buildings, Roads and Public Works (MPBRPW) and, thereupon, they were licensed to practice their profession in the country. The long-term perspec-

¹⁷ Stanoeva, "Sofia," 99.

tive of their career-building strategy called for a stabilization of their position against the competition of commissioned foreign architects, who, until then, authored around 90 percent of all building projects in the country.¹⁸ The stepping stone for capitalizing their corporate interests was the establishment of the Bulgarian Engineer-Architect Society (BEAS) in 1893, with a membership of fifty people and its own journal, *Spisanie na BIAD*, in circulation from 1894 on.

Table 8.1 Foreign Centers of Professional Training of Certified Bulgarian Architects and Engineers by 1912,
Source: “Spisak” (A list), *Spisanie na BIAD* 18 (1912): 168–72.

country	number of graduates	main educational location	number of graduates
Germany	112	Munich	41
Belgium	100	Ghent	64
Austria–Hungary	59	Vienna	33
		Prague	19
Switzerland	41	Lausanne	26
Russia	30	Saint Petersburg	30
France	16	Paris	10
Italy	8	Torino	6
US	3	—	—
Greece	1	Athens	1
Romania	1	Bucharest	1
Serbia	1	Belgrade	1

Gradually, Bulgarian foreign-trained construction specialists found quite diverse employment opportunities in Bulgaria, mainly in Sofia: they were commissioned the design of public and private buildings, held posts in the civil service, prepared competition programs for grand projects, participated as delegates in selection committees, drafted building regulations, and the like. By 1915, according to the list of licenses issued by the MPBRPW, their ranks included 415 technicians with higher education, among them 227 construction engineers and 78 architects, as well as 238 technicians with a college degree.¹⁹

¹⁸ Yokimov, “Individualnoto bogato zhilishte,” 68.

¹⁹ “Novi knigi” (New books), *Spisanie na BIAD* 17 (1915): 134–35, 134.

Table 8.2 Increase of the Territory and the Population of Sofia, 1881–1938
 Source: Penko Vazharov, “Narastvane na naselenieto v Sofiya prez perioda 1881–1934” (Increase of the population in Sofia over the period 1881–1934), *Serdika* 9 (1937): 20–31, 20–21; Radoslav Mihaylov, “Zastroyavaneto na segashna Sofiya i sashnostta na noviya gradoustroystven plan na golyama Sofiya” (The building of present-day Sofia and the essence of the new master plan of greater Sofia), *Spisanie na BLAD*, 12–13 (1937): 143–144; Vazharov, 20–21; Kiradzhiev, *Sofiya 1878–1943*, 178.

year	city territory	population including illegal settlements	
		population	beyond the official city borders
1881	2.5 sq. km	20,856	22,856
1888	6.7 sq. km	30,928	33,079
1890	7.3 sq. km	–	–
1892	7.3 sq. km	46,593	48,776
1895	7.5 sq. km	–	–
1900	7.5 sq. km	67,789	70,143
1905	7.5 sq. km	82,621	85,633
1910	7.5 sq. km	102,812	108,370
1919	7.9 sq. km	–	–
1920	7.9 sq. km	154,025	165,657
1921	14.3 sq. km	–	–
1922	20.6 sq. km	–	–
1924	21.8 sq. km	–	–
1925	22.2 sq. km	–	–
1926	24.9 sq. km	213,002	232,901
1931	26.3 sq. km	–	–
1934	29.9 sq. km	287,095	328,993
1938	57.0 sq. km	–	–

Between National and International Aspirations, 1900–1929

The attitude of Bulgarian architects toward their foreign colleagues contracted in local projects was framed by increasing competitiveness. This development reflected the contradictory nature of Bulgarian architects’ professional standing: the high prestige attributed to European cultural imports granted them professional legitimacy because of their foreign education, but also limited their career prospects because it yielded precedence to foreign expertise. Yet, around the turn of the twentieth century,

the field of construction and architectural design in Sofia was a growing labor niche, partly because of the immense growth rates of both the city population and the city environs (see Table 8.2) and partly because most institutions still had their offices squeezed in rented private houses, which generated an unceasing demand for public buildings.²⁰

Upon their return to Bulgaria, the young architects and engineers, recent graduates of European technical schools, unhesitatingly accepted the established architectural trends of European mimicry and rejection of the Ottoman legacy, and carried on the transfer of modern cultural patterns from the West. However, the professional community soon recognized that in order to attain a leading role in local architecture, they would have to invent an original Bulgarian style in architecture instead of offering the same approaches mastered by their foreign colleagues.

An early expression of their hostility toward foreign involvement in the shaping of the symbolic image of the nation state surfaced in 1900. Picking up the politicized anti-Ottoman discourse, *Spisanie na BIAD* published a remonstrance of the artistic creation of the Bulgarian pavilion at the Paris World Exposition by a French architect. It was triggered by the allegorical Oriental patterns employed in the arrangement of the pavilion: "To the foreigner, our pavilion gives the impression of representing some European colony recently extracted from Turkish slavery... We scorned our ecclesiastical style as unsuitable for a pavilion and instead hired a Parisian architect who has hardly ever heard of Bulgarians. He knew that we are yesterday's Turkish slaves and, therefore, our pavilion had to have a Turkish spirit."²¹ Five years later, the author of this critique, Anton Tornyov, was commissioned to design the Bulgarian pavilion at the World Exposition in Liège, where he applied a presumed "national" building tradition

²⁰ By 1911, public institutions in Sofia occupied 4,000 rented rooms with an annual rent of 1,000,000 leva. At the same time, the cost of the construction of proper buildings for these institutions was estimated at 8,000,000 leva. *Sofiyski izvestnik* 4 (12 November 1911): 1.

²¹ Anton Tornyov, "Vsesvetska izlozhba v kraya na devetnadesetoto stoletie" (The World Exhibition at the end of the nineteenth century), *Spisanie na BIAD* 12 (1900): 225–35, 234.

borrowed from Bulgarian private houses of the Ottoman period.²² However, this turn to the Ottoman architectural heritage from the recent past was an early symptom of a tendency that did not fully unfold until the interwar period.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, by force of the de-Ottomanization reflex, national authenticity in architecture was sought in the pre-Ottoman period and, more particularly, in medieval historical monuments in Bulgaria, whose exploration was defined as a cardinal task by the BEAS's Constituent Charter. Thus, the "national style" (also labeled "national romanticism") was invented based on ancient Bulgarian church architecture of Byzantine origin. Most characteristic for this transfer were the alternating belts of white stone and red brick masonry and the glazed ceramic ornaments featured by all architectural examples of this style. What made the style highly relevant for the national project of capital city construction was its claim to a national artistic continuity overarching the heroic (i.e., pre-Ottoman) past and the recently formed nationhood. Rehabilitated as the national style, the Byzantine origins of the trend were ideologically obliterated. This way, public validation of the new style also disguised the transfer of analogous architectural trends from abroad: the neo-Byzantine style, popular in the West as a function of the "Orientalist imaginary," and in Russia as an embodiment of the country's Orthodox belonging and its "claim to succeeding Byzantine greatness."²³ Despite the artistic aspiration for a national architecture that characterized the strivings of Bulgarian architects throughout this and the ensuing decades, they ceaselessly kept track of the modern developments in the theory and practice of their profession on the European level, and persistently presented the current international trends on the pages of their journal (see Table 8.3).

²² Marinov, "Chiya e тази kashta?," 330.

²³ *Ibid.*, 327.

Table 8.3 Articles in the BEAS Journal by Topic
Source: *Spisanie na BIAD*, 1897–1939; compiled by the author.

year*	number of articles	international developments	developments in the Balkans	translated articles
	N	%		
1897–1898	97	20.1	%	%
1899	165	15.8	1.0	4.1
1900	97	16.5	2.4	0.6
1901	83	31.4	1.0	2.1
1902	90	30.0	1.2	4.8
1903	84	27.4	0	6.7
1904	19	21.1	0	7.1
1905	27	7.4	0	0
1906	13	15.4	0	11.1
1907	14	0	0	0
1908	22	31.8	0	0
1910	359	20.1	0	9.1
1911	222	23.0	1.7	4.7
1912–1913	234	11.1	0.5	5.4
1914	215	28.9	0.9	0
1915	150	25.3	0.5	4.2
1923	175	18.3	0.7	2.0
1924	168	18.5	0.6	4.6
1925	93	10.8	1.2	0.6
1927	154	10.4	2.2	1.1
1928	183	13.7	2.6	0.6
1929	156	16.0	0.5	2.2
1930	143	13.3	1.3	1.9
1931	140	22.1	0.7	1.4
1932	146	8.2	0	5.7
1933	165	20.0	1.4	25.3
1934	176	16.5	0	3.0
1935	166	16.9	0.6	31.3
1936	160	18.1	0	30.7
1937	155	18.7	0.6	25.6
1938	136	18.4	0	31.0
1939	157	16.0	0	30.1
Average	–	18.4	1.3	33.1

* The journal was published from 1894 until 1949 with an interruption between 1916 and 1922. The annual files of 1894–1895, 1896, 1909, and 1926 are not accessible.

The early examples of the national style can be seen in Sofia's religious architecture. Here, the style was first implemented in the reconstructed Sveti Sedmochislenitsi Church, hitherto Imaret Mosque or the Black Mosque, by Petko Momchilov and Yordan Milanov in 1903. Other religious manifestations of national architecture in Sofia were the Holy Synod, also designed by the Momchilov and Milanov team (1908–1911); the Theological Academy (1905), the Central Synagogue (1909), and the Seminary (1914), all designed by the Austrian Grünanger, who was strongly influenced by the Bulgarian national style.

In 1904, Momchilov, the pioneer of national architecture, introduced the trend into the realm of secular architecture with his design for the Municipal Mineral Baths. They were constructed in 1908–1911, simultaneously with another secular example of the national style, the Municipal Market Hall, conceived by Naum Torbov. The Baths had great symbolic significance as the mineral springs inside them were accepted as an official emblem of the capital and incorporated into Sofia's modern coat of arms. The Market Hall, in turn, was an integral part of a long-lasting municipal campaign to modernize marketplaces in Sofia, which were recognized as yet another pronounced epitome of Oriental urban culture.²⁴ Looking for European models in an attempt to "acculturate" the retail trade sites and practices of Sofia, the municipality financed a forty-day trip around Europe in 1907 for an examination of market halls and slaughterhouses. The commissioned architects Naum Torbov and Hristo Boyadzhiev traveled mainly through Austria-Hungary, where they visited Vienna, Budapest, Szeged, and Timișoara.²⁵

Apart from the recognized modernizing mission of public hygiene and aesthetics that motivated the projects for these municipal facilities, the Mineral Baths and the Market Hall in particular served a broader agenda of European image making because they

²⁴ For an analysis of the modernization of marketplaces in Sofia, see Stanoeva, "Halite v modernata topologiya," 289–306.

²⁵ "Letter from H. Boyadzhiev and N. Torbov to the Mayor, sent from Vienna, 1/03/1907"; "Letter from H. Boyadzhiev and N. Torbov to the Mayor, sent from Budapest, 6/03/1907"; "Letter from H. Boyadzhiev and N. Torbov to the Mayor, sent from Budapest, 25/03/1907," DA-Sofia, f. 1K, op. 3, a.e. 211, l. 3–9.

were both located in the very heart of the old city center, which so far had been mostly untouched by modern urbanism. They formed an architectural ensemble intended not only to modernize the physiognomy of the old inner city, but also to create a visual counterpoint to the vivid presence of the single remaining mosque in Sofia, Banya Bashi, in the square amid them.²⁶

The secular variation of the national style revealed more discernibly the influence of contemporary European architectural production, mainly the impact of the secession, beyond the surface of medievaesque reproduction, as is evident in a later judgment: "In the compositional principles, the tectonic solutions and the structure of these secular buildings, we will not find even the slightest trace of 'ancient Bulgarian elements'; those are limited, as it seems, only to the façade, which is elaborated most often as archaized appliqué decoration.... When an architectural style is reduced only to façade decoration, it is compromised."²⁷ Underneath its historicist veneer, the national style employed essentially modernist constructive trends and materials, notably ferroconcrete and the functionalist approach in the building craft it dictated. However, the wider dissemination of the style was hindered by the heavy toll of the country's participation in three subsequent wars in the 1910s.

Ranging from territorial losses to deep economic deprivations, the devastating effects of the Balkan Wars and World War I, which left Bulgaria defeated and were thereupon coined the first and second national catastrophes, strongly affected Sofia. The increase of the city population by 50 percent—from 102,812 in 1910 to 154,025 in 1920²⁸—partly due to the influx of refugees, who constituted 16 percent of the residents by 1920,²⁹ and the unregulated urban sprawl through the illegal settling of entire "homeless" neighborhoods, produced a severe housing shortage. Simultaneously, the wartime mobilization of manufacturing, in-

²⁶ Stanoeva, "Interpretations of the Ottoman Urban Legacy," 220–21.

²⁷ Valentin Angelov, "Za balgarski stil" [Regarding a Bulgarian style], *Sofiya* 4 (1988): 8–10, 9.

²⁸ Penko Vazharov, "Narastvane na naselenieto v Sofiya prez perioda 1881–1934" (The increase of the population in Sofia over the period 1881–1934), *Serdika* 9 (1937): 20–31, 21.

²⁹ *Sofiya—120 godini stolitsa*, 498.

cluding brick and ceramic production,³⁰ left the construction industry short of capacities to tackle the housing demand.

In the architectural praxis, the postwar conditions necessitated a turn from large-scale monumental projects to mass construction of residential buildings. Accordingly, the professional discourse of Bulgarian architects broadened its scope to integrate the complex technical matters of modern construction engineering. Yet the professional fascination of Bulgarian architects with constructivism and the international style of Bauhaus and Le Corbusier fueled much theorization, but these styles were rarely successfully applied due to practical difficulties such as the lack of large-scale industrial production of the necessary materials and of up-to-date building regulations.³¹ The preoccupation of the guild with intrinsically constructive problems in no way eclipsed its interest in the more artistic aspects of the building craft, nor did it suppress the relevance of these issues to the nation-building project. On the contrary, the debates on architectural style and monumentality intensified in the interwar period, although the focus shifted from the realm of praxis to the academic realm of theorization.

The achievement of full national sovereignty with the proclamation of the Third Bulgarian Kingdom in 1908, and especially the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1923 incited a profound reevaluation of the Ottoman past rooted in the strengthened national self-consciousness. In the realm of monumental architecture, these political and psycho-social changes produced a modulated architectural ideologization of the national. With the waning of the anti-Ottoman vigor, the conceptualization of that period and its material culture underwent a revision. As a result, its perception was no longer dominated by the political dependency of Bulgaria under the empire's reign, but rather by the ensuing national consolidation of the politically dependent Bulgarian ethnos.³² Accordingly, the indigenous architecture of the Bulgarian ethnic communities attained high acclaim precisely because it was reinterpreted as a purely national artistic production signifying a shared ethnic belonging: "The Bulgarian

³⁰ Iakimova, *Sofiya na prostolyudieto*, 92.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 95–105.

³² Stanoeva, "Sofia," 105.

people, isolated in the midst of the powerful Ottoman Empire, were detached from any foreign influence and impact. In this period, the foreign influences of the two [former Bulgarian] kingdoms were being assimilated and filtered through [the Bulgarian people's] own cultural production and, as a result, this art emerged that we can and should acknowledge as national Bulgarian. Humbled and bent in the tranquility of the foreign power, the population of the Bulgarian state [sic] conglomerated and was welded together. Thus conditions emerged for folk art... In this regard, the Turkish domination exerted a beneficial influence."³³

Because the major architectural production of the imperially subordinated Bulgarians was in private housing, the appraisal of their building traditions was coupled with a longing for the reinvention of the traditional cottage, the "most natural fellowship for working together and supporting each other,"³⁴ as a romanticized divorce from the imitative import of European modern architecture. Yet this return from foreign transfer back to the roots of local architecture was in no way a distinctive Bulgarian phenomenon. On the contrary, it was in unison with wider European trends in the period of cultural particularism of the 1920s. Reinspired by an antimodern turn, this European trend had its origins in the late nineteenth century, when in various European regional contexts there was a movement for the resurrection of rustic building traditions as a stamp of national authenticity.³⁵ The stylistic detour left its mark mainly on cooperative residential houses in Sofia, which due to the post-World War I housing shortage tied up most of the architectural activities in the capital city in the 1920s and 1930s.

Along with Bulgarian ethnic architecture, the Muslim architecture inherited from the Ottoman imperial domination also obtained some positive connotations. After having been subjected to undisputed annihilation, the vanishing Oriental heritage was now cherished and its remaining monuments were preserved as rare cultural

³³ Todor Zlatev, "Periodi na balgarskata arhitektura" (Periods of Bulgarian architecture), *Spisanie na BIAD* 19 (1925): 304–5, 305.

³⁴ Yordan Danchev, "Gradostroitelno natsionalno stopanstvo" (Town-building national economy), *Serdika* 5 (1937): 8–10, 9.

³⁵ Marinov, "Chiya e тази kashta?," 331–38.

exponents, which, not least of all, could pragmatically enhance a profit-generating tourist industry.³⁶ Against the backdrop of international fascination with the Orient, Bulgarian architects reevaluated its artifacts as originals that could also provide inspiration for national architectural originality. Trendafil Trendafilov, the main Bulgarian theoretician of the modern city at that time, appealed to the readers of *Spisanie na BIAD*: “An era has dawned in which the German vertical and stylistic forms should no longer serve as inspiration to us. We should rather find inspiration in the Bulgarian and Far Eastern styles because today’s modern architecture seeks its inspiration precisely in the Near and Far East.”³⁷ Apart from emulating the worldwide Oriental fashion as a rearguard within European architecture, Bulgarian architecture was now claiming a special, somewhat vanguard, position vis-à-vis the transfer of Eastern trends to the West by acknowledging that “Bulgarian art is located between the East and the West.”³⁸

The combination of attitudes favoring Bulgarian vernacular houses from the Ottoman period and the Oriental architecture led to a reassessment of medieval Bulgarian architecture (and especially the apparent Byzantine influence on it), which had set the formative framework of the national style in the 1900s. Thus, the study on Bulgarian architecture by Tornyov concludes that such a style should search for its primary sources in the Ottoman era rather than in the previous epoch, whose “constructive forms... are few and even those few are of no special importance because they are pure Byzantine patterns that do not show any Bulgarian imprint, at least not in their borrowing.”³⁹

Yet, in the revival of Ottoman architecture, there was no less an apparent ideological falsification than in the case of the earlier na-

³⁶ The campaign’s economic rationale of attracting tourists and popularizing Bulgarian culture internationally was emphasized in various publications in *Serdika*, the official journal of the municipality of Sofia.

³⁷ Trendafil Trendafilov, “Materiali ot natsionalni arhitekturni formi” (Materials of national architectural forms), *Spisanie na BIAD* 6 (1923): 89–90, 90.

³⁸ S. Atanasov, “Balgarski stil” (Bulgarian style), *Izvestiya na IAK* 5 (1940): 85–86, 85.

³⁹ Anton Tornyov, *Arhitekturni motivi* (Architectural motifs from Bulgaria) (Sofia: Armeyski voenno-izdatelski fond, 1925), 9.

tionalization of the Byzantine building legacy. The Ottoman housing patterns, an idiosyncratic hallmark of the generic Balkan town in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, were purified from their ethnically hybrid nature to be restated as native Bulgarian. As Tchavdar Marinov summarizes in his study on the fabrication of the traditional Bulgarian house from the Ottoman Balkan heritage, “the obvious similarity between, on the one hand, Bulgarian houses and, on the other hand, Turkish, Greek, Armenian, and Jewish houses from before 1878 was easily explained: the latter were also built by Bulgarian craftsmen and, therefore, were Bulgarian in style.”⁴⁰

Following the national turn in the architectural aspirations of Bulgarian professionals, European architecture was also subjected to a reinterpretation from the perspective of nationality. What was earlier replicated as a trademark of Europeaness and modernity was now disintegrated from a unified standard into a polyphony of national styles—French, Austrian, Viennese, and so on.⁴¹ Among this diversity, Bulgarian national architecture could more easily claim an equal standing. Yet Tornyov pushed this proparticularistic stance further, arguing that “the architect, by the peculiarity of his profession, is most adapted to leading the struggle against this loathsome pursuit of internationalism... If chauvinism is a bad trait seen from a higher social viewpoint, then the negation of what is their own is the worst trait of a nation... That precisely is tragic in our tribe: it is not as chauvinist as necessary for a nation that wants to be autonomous and not depend on others for anything.”⁴² This appeal for an embrace of chauvinism by the Bulgarian architectural community was a foreboding of their shared attitude manifested in the following decade.

Between Professionalism and Nationalism, 1930–1940

In the interwar period, the intolerance of Bulgarian architects and engineers toward their foreign colleagues working in the country assumed a sharp edge: from competitiveness on more or less equal

⁴⁰ Marinov, “Chiya e тази kashta?” 336.

⁴¹ For example, Tornyov, *Arhitekturni motivi*, 4.

⁴² Ibid.

terms, the participation of foreign specialists in the construction field was increasingly viewed as an intervention in a domain where the “Bulgarian technician” deserved a fully sovereign reign. At first, criticism toward the engagement of foreign expertise was articulated in professional terms as a struggle for national authenticity, an articulation strategically appealing to the state’s objectives of national self-representation. Moreover, it was hardly realistic to claim local ingenuity as separable from foreign influences and schooling, and hardly practical to refute transfer of knowledge as no longer imperative under the challenging new socio-economic conditions brought by the war devastation with which Bulgarian urban planning so far had no experience. However, with the approach of World War II, in tune with the flourishing nationalist rhetoric, the architects’ resentment of foreign competition reached the dimensions of a vigorous political campaign divorced from any professionally justifiable aspirations. The populist undertone of the campaign changed not only its charge but also its target audience: appealing at first to the ordinary “conscious Bulgarian to cry out loudly for the salvation [of our building culture] from irreparable perdition,”⁴³ in the 1930s, its proponents started voicing demands for legal intervention by state agencies, as the collective body of Bulgarian architects and engineers were finding increasing support for their demands in the turn to parochialism in Bulgarian politics.

In the late 1920s, the guild of Bulgarian architects and engineers was shaken not only by the threatening foreign competition in a situation of rising unemployment, but also by internal quarrels that escalated into a split inside the professional organization. By 1930, there were already two separatist organizations challenging the BEAS’s authority: the Society of Bulgarian Architects and the Association of Freelance Engineers and Architects. Their dissent on problems of technical expertise and professional agency notwithstanding, the three organizations coalesced in unanimity on the issue of foreigners entering their “own terrain.”⁴⁴ During its Sev-

⁴³ D. Popov, “Vaprosat za natsionalnata ni arhitektura” (The question of our national architecture), *Spisanie na BIAD* 14 (1923): 241–42, 241.

⁴⁴ Boris Chernev, “V zashtita na rodnoto tehničko tvorčestvo” (In defense of the native technical creativity), *Izvestiya na IAK* 1 (1943): 8–10, 8.

enth Congress in February 1930, the Society of Bulgarian Architects passed a resolution to demand that only Bulgarian citizens be permitted to fill the architectural posts within public administration and to design public buildings.⁴⁵ A similar resolution was adopted by the freelancers during their First Congress held the same year.⁴⁶ These demands received full support from BEAS, which no longer disguised its discriminatory pathos in style-related arguments and, instead, declared: "Our state turned into an orphanage for foreigners perhaps incompetent in their own states or at least incapable of earning their living in their homelands. They came and continue to come because Bulgaria is a promised land to them, but not to us."⁴⁷

The internal split in the professional community was reinforced on a statutory basis in 1937 by the Decree on the Chamber of Engineering and Architecture and on the Academic Organization of Engineers and Architects in Bulgaria, which recognized the long-existing BEAS as an academic organization and the then-formed Chamber as a semigovernmental organ "to serve as a consultative body of state institutions on technical-economic issues..., to provide opinion to the MPBRPW on various bills and draft bylaws regarding the application of technology and those regulating the freelance technical practice of engineers and architects..., to provide information of technical nature to various public institutions."⁴⁸ Membership in the Chamber of Engineering and Architecture (CEA) was set as a mandatory eligibility requirement for freelance technical practitioners in construction and construction-related commerce, industry, and entrepreneurship. At the time of its establishment, the Chamber had a membership base of 922 people

⁴⁵ Radoslav Mihaylov, "Kakvo iskat arhitektite" (What do the architects want), *Spisanie na BIAD* 7 (1930): 155–56.

⁴⁶ Radoslav Mihaylov, "Kakvo iskat svobodnopraktikuvashite inzheneri i arhitekti" (What do the freelance engineers and architects want), *Spisanie na BIAD* 8 (1930): 178–80.

⁴⁷ G. Pipev, "Za chuzhdentsite tehniitsi v Balgariya" (Regarding the foreign technicians in Bulgaria), *Spisanie na BIAD* 2–3 (1933): 36–37, 36.

⁴⁸ "Naredba-zakon za inzhenerno-arhitektnata kamara i za akademichnata organizatsiya na inzhenerite i arhitektite v Balgariya" (Decree on the Chamber of Engineering and Architecture and on the academic organization of engineers and architects in Bulgaria), *Darzhaven vestnik* 221 (1937): 3929–33, 3929.

in twelve regional sections, with the Sofia section enlisting more than half of all members.⁴⁹ Thus, the Chamber encompassed more than one-third of all licensed technicians in the country totaling 2,524, among them approximately 1,000 freelancers.⁵⁰

The newly defined delineation of authority indeed strengthened the positions of the two respective professional bodies vis-à-vis non-members and nonprofessional agencies alike. Backed by its legal status, the CEA launched a strong offensive against foreign technicians working in Bulgaria and expanded its front by enlisting the cooperation of other professional associations with the ultimate objective “to conduct a joint action among the governing agencies to implement a legal provision through which foreigners could obtain Bulgarian citizenship only upon a consent by the respective professional organization.”⁵¹ As set in its statutes, the Chamber’s support for its members mainly amounted to the “elimination of unemployment, and restriction and control of foreign construction companies.”⁵² Its first step to achieve this goal was a request sent to and subsequently accepted by the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Labor to “order the suspension of issuing permits for long-term residence in Bulgaria and the reexamination of the permits already granted with the participation of a representative of CEA.”⁵³ As a result, the next public competition for an architectural plan of one of the central sites of Sofia, Banski Square, came with a call for an “anonymous competition among architects of Bulgarian citizenship.”⁵⁴

The Chamber’s campaign against the appointment and contracting of foreigners had far-reaching repercussions in the daily press and in the specialized journals of other trades that formed a univocal exhortation to “free ourselves” from foreigners in order to stop

⁴⁹ “Vatreshen zhivot” (Internal affairs), *Izvestiya na IAK* 1 (1938): 14–15, 15.

⁵⁰ “Chisloto na tehniitsite v Balgariya” (The number of technicians in Bulgaria), *Izvestiya na IAK* 1 (1938): 15–16.

⁵¹ “Vtoro redovno obshto sabranie na IAK” (Second regular general meeting of CEA), *Izvestiya na IAK* 24 (1938): 425–34, 429.

⁵² “Plan za deynostta na IAK” (Action plan of CEA), *Izvestiya na IAK* 3 (1938): 40–43, 41.

⁵³ “Vatreshen zhivot” (Internal affairs), *Izvestiya na IAK* 17 (1938): 320–22, 320.

⁵⁴ “Tehnicheska hronika” (Technical chronicle), *Izvestiya na IAK* 22–23 (1938): 416–18, 416.

being “servants in our own motherland”⁵⁵ or “foreigners in our own country.”⁵⁶ Not relinquishing their pressure on the government organs and reiterating their discontent with the engagement of foreigners in any job ranging from a contracted designer to a company manager, the Chamber promoted legal provisions restricting foreign entrepreneurship in construction.

Yet by politicizing its agenda and supporting its demands with arguments corresponding to the increasing prewar militarism of the Bulgarian state, the professional agency of Bulgarian architects and engineers was caught in the difficult position to maintain a fragile balance between the exclusion of and alliance with foreigners along the lines of the state’s political hostilities and allegiances. Hence, the relevance of contemporary European urbanism for the architectural and urban-planning production in Bulgaria did not fade, but rather lost its cosmopolitan and apolitical spirit. In 1937, a new master plan for Sofia was commissioned to the German architect Adolf Muesmann, who applied the accepted Nazi version of the garden-city planning ideal.⁵⁷ The procedural violations of this commissioning, which suspended the announced open competition, together with technical flaws in the final plan, led to harsh criticism from individual Bulgarian architects, including various accusations of incompetence. Yet the Chamber refrained from expressing an expert opinion on the plan. Instead, it made a somewhat soft principle objection compared with its generally uncompromising stance on the issue of contracting foreigners in urban planning and construction: “Not in the least would we want to offend the distinguished Professor Muesmann, but we would only like to emphasize the wounded prestige of Bulgarian engineers and architects because they were capable of creating a new master plan for Sofia, whereupon it would have been completely justifiable to summon a foreign expert in urban planning for an opinion on the accepted Bulgarian

⁵⁵ G. Hristov, “Slugi v sobstvenoto si otechestvo” (Servants in our own motherland), *Izvestiya na IAK* 8 (1939): 160–61, 161.

⁵⁶ V. Bozhkov, “Bezrobotitsata i chuzhdentsite v Bulgariya” (Unemployment and foreigners in Bulgaria), *Izvestiya na IAK* 8 (1940): 139–40, 139.

⁵⁷ Lampe, “Interwar Sofia,” 46–48.

project.”⁵⁸ In line with this dubious standpoint of professional xenophobia and political diplomacy, on the pages of its journal, *Izvestiya na IAK*, the CEA publicized the expert visits of German architects invited by the municipal authorities of Sofia to review the urban planning enterprise, among them Albert Speer, who did not come in person but sent a delegate to present his opinion. In addition, *Izvestiya na IAK* printed praising overviews of the work of other German colleagues such as Hermann Jansen,⁵⁹ despite what should have seemed a usurpation of their national niche only a few years earlier, when Jansen was commissioned the drafting of master plans for several large cities in Bulgaria.

At the outbreak of World War II, the transfer of knowledge between the Bulgarian society of architects and engineers and their broader international community largely narrowed its scope to Germany and Italy. Following this channel of professional exchange, in 1941 Trendafilov, the author of the most thorough Bulgarian treatise in urban planning (*The modern city* from 1927), published a theoretical exploration titled “The totalitarian city.” In its pages, the architect, who had earlier stated that it was the main task of modern urban planning “to facilitate circulation, to increase population density in order to achieve the contact necessary for business deals, to increase the means of motion,”⁶⁰ expressed his agreement with Nazi architectural ideology, admitting “how deadly are hitherto prevailing geometrical and landscape solutions in urban planning, how maleficent is today’s barrack, barn-like, waffle multi-story architecture..., and how it is not possible in buildings with more than three stories to raise children.”⁶¹

⁵⁸ “Po vaproa za dopuskane na chuzhdentsi-spetsialisti v nasheto korabostroitelstvo” (On the issue of allowing foreign specialists in our shipbuilding), *Izvestiya na IAK* 6 (1943): 118–19, 118.

⁵⁹ Trendafil Trendafilov, “Mezhdunarodnata deynost na edin gradostroitel” (The international activity of one city builder), *Izvestiya na IAK* 14 (1940): 257.

⁶⁰ Trendafil Trendafilov, *Moderniyat grad* (The modern city) (Sofia, 1927), 104.

⁶¹ Trendafil Trendafilov, “Totalitarniyat grad i dosegashnite razlichni vidove gradoustroystveni razresheniya” (The totalitarian city and the various former urban planning solutions), *Izvestiya na IAK* 13 (1941): 193–95, 194.

Epilogue

In the post-Ottoman decades, the face and form of the Bulgarian capital city was shaped by the transfer of modern Western building expertise directed equally by foreign architects and local cadres of foreign training. Accordingly, Sofia's public edifices and private houses replicated European architectural trends even when they were seemingly refuted. In the bias of pro-European and anti-Oriental aspirations and in a vacillation between cosmopolitan and parochialist inclinations, Bulgarian architects' search for national authenticity was time and again drawn to and driven away from European modernism and the Ottoman traditions.

In the decades of socialist urbanization that followed World War II, these tendencies remained, though in a new ideological guise. Adopting the credo of socialist realism for an art that had to be "national in form, socialist in content," Bulgarian architecture continued to pursue authenticity by emulating foreign stylistic principles, though the internationalist aspiration limited its focus to the Soviet Union, and by inventing national originality from the legacy of the Ottoman Empire. Simultaneously with the uncritical reproduction of socialist art as elaborated under the dictate of a Soviet top-down vision, the negative attitude toward the past dependency under Ottoman rule intensified and the Ottoman influence over the vernacular building craft was obliterated through an accentuation of the Bulgarian revival epoch starting in the early eighteenth century and its own, supposedly genuinely national cultural stamp.

The Stalinist period saw a return to classical monumentality and an increasing demand for representational public buildings. Bulgarian urbanists, at first enthusiastic about the new professional opportunities as they imagined the engineer to assume a leading role within the new political regime,⁶² soon found themselves in the grave condition of forfeiting personal initiative and professional freedom. By 1949, freelance practice was abolished along with the existing professional organizations. Subsequently, the architects' utopia of a technocratic regime in which they would hold the mo-

⁶² Evgeni Georgov, "Obshtestvenata rolya na inzhenera i arhitekta" (The social role of the engineer and the architect), *Izvestiya na IAK* 3-4 (1947): 1-5.

nopoly on expert decision-making was confronted by the reality of the radical bureaucratization of all professional fields coerced under the administrative control of the state apparatus and under the double pressures of central planning and party oversight. As a mockery of a professional corporation, the Scientific-Technical Union was established under the state's supervision and some of the members of the dissolved CEA and BEAS formed an architects' trade union under its auspices. Yet unionization hardly safeguarded a vestige of professional autonomy as the union's main objective was political indoctrination and disciplining as well as Sovietization of technical practice.⁶³

⁶³ "Resolution 131A of the Politburo of the CC of the BCP concerning the Scientific-Technical Union and its tasks in the struggle for building socialism in our country, 21/08/1952," TsDA, f. 1B, op.6, a.e. 1645, l. 188. For a detailed account of the process of subordinating technical practice to the central governance, see Stanoeva, *Sofia: The Socialist City*, 234–44.

9. *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*: Radical Urbanism and the International Discourse on Planning in the Interwar Period

Martin Kohlrausch

Little was lacking for Warsaw to become for a short but significant moment the center of modern architecture. Early in 1933 it became apparent that the CIAM IV congress, the fourth meeting of the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) could not be staged, as planned, in Moscow. One year earlier, Stalin had publicly changed the official art policy to Socialist Realism, thus excluding the more avant-garde currents of architecture from the sphere of the officially accepted. CIAM, the self-declared spearhead of the modernist movement in architecture, had thus lost the basis for a convention in the USSR.

For the young CIAM organization this was disappointing in at least two ways: the CIAM IV congress had been prepared for some three years and was meant to achieve a synthesis of the work done so far under the overarching topic of “the functional city.” Thus, the organization’s comprehensive claim to develop solutions to the various problems of modern societies—reaching far beyond the built environment—was to be documented. For this purpose, and this was the second setback, Moscow seemed to be an exceptionally well-suited place. Since around 1930, different groups of Western architects had been working in the Soviet Union, fascinated by seemingly grandiose prospects to shape a new society via huge building projects up to the scale of whole new cities. Plans for the rebuilding of Moscow, in particular the international competition

for the Palace of the Soviets, had attracted attention far beyond the Soviet Union.¹

But at the same time Warsaw attracted the attention of CIAM leaders. The Polish capital was not only on the itinerary to Moscow, but here too, if not in such a dramatic manner as in the USSR, there seemed to be a promising experimentation field for CIAM's urbanistic and architectural concepts. At a meeting in Warsaw in December 1932, Polish CIAM members had energetically stressed precisely this point. In this interpretation the metropolis on the Vistula River figured as an urban environment between the huge changes in the ideologically motivated yet constrained Soviet Union and the saturated Western nations, in which the basic course of urbanistic development was already set before World War I. Warsaw thus seemed almost the natural substitute for Moscow. Indeed, preparations for a congress in the Polish capital had already begun when in May 1933 CIAM's presidency opted for the attractive option of a Mediterranean cruise from Marseille to Athens as the new setting for the congress. However, this did not change anything in the central role Warsaw was to play at the congress, at least indirectly.

Urban planning in Warsaw is, like in every metropolis, an extremely complex matter. This chapter does not aim to deliver a comprehensive study of the topic. Rather, it focuses on how new urban schemes of Warsaw were communicated in an international environment, in particular an example both radical and telling: the so-called *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* (Functional Warsaw) plan of 1933/34, a direct result of the CIAM IV congress.

A comprehensive overview of this topic is a topic further complicated by the extremely scarce research literature, which predominantly offers one-dimensional (though not generally wrong) explanations.² The bleak picture of the city's past in the Russian Empire before World War I—a practice not uncommon for other cities in the region—is contrasted with the purported steady ascent

¹ Bodenschatz et al., *Städtebau im Schatten Stalins*; Gestwa, "Technik als Kultur der Zukunft," 37–73. See, in particular, the examples of Le Corbusier: Cohen, *Le Corbusier*, and of Ernst May: Flier, "Possibly the Greatest Task," 157–95.

² See, e.g., the recent and very well-informed overview: Jankiewicz et al., "Tradycje urbanistyczne Warszawy," 34–59. The best introduction in English is Wynot, *Warsaw between the World Wars*.

of Warsaw to its quasi-natural metropolitan status in post-1918 Europe.³ In particular the name of the last president of Warsaw, Stefan Starzyński (1934–1939), stands, in this strand of the literature, for the reality and chances of urban progress.⁴

It is particularly striking how little is known about the leading urbanists and architects behind the dynamic changes of Warsaw's urban fabric and how rarely interwar Warsaw is placed in a broader European picture.⁵ This is even more evident when one takes into consideration the significance of Warsaw as one of the biggest—in terms of population—and economically important places of the region in question.

In my examination of what I term “radical urbanism,” I refer to both the specific situation of Warsaw and the challenges it faced, but also to selected solutions presented, and, as I argue, to some extent deliberately presented, in a radical outlook. The chapter thus exposes the degree of reflection—e.g., the fashioning of the urban crisis—which in itself is significant for my argument.⁶ In doing so, aspects of urban planning in Warsaw that point beyond the city itself are highlighted. The chapter also demonstrates how strongly the professional standing of the involved architects and urbanists and the development and planning of the metropolitan city Warsaw were intertwined.

³ Prokopowych, “Lemberg (Lwów, Lviv) Architecture,” 100–29.

⁴ Drozdowski, *Starzyński*. More traditional accounts on urbanism in Warsaw can be found in Fisher, *City and Regional Planning*; Kowalewski, *Warszawa* (both with a focus on the communist period), and Knapp, *Aglomeracja Warszawska*; Szwankowski, *Warszawa*; Leśniakowska, *Architektura w Warszawie*; Drozdowski et al., *Warszawa w latach*.

⁵ The increasing literature on avant-gardes in Poland after 1918 offers the best starting point. See, in particular, Miłobędzki, *Architecture and Avant-garde*; Parlagreco, *Costruttivismo in Polonia*; Schuler et al., *Der neue Staat*; Nowakowska-Sito, *Wyprawa w dwudziestolecie*.

⁶ It is not by chance that Czesław Miłosz's account of his life from the late 1990s contains an entry on the topic center-periphery: Miłosz, *Mein ABC*. See also Jedlicki, *A Suburb of Europe*.

The Late Metropolis: Urban Crisis and Urban Planning in Warsaw after 1916

The formation of Polish statehood in 1918 out of the territories occupied by the partition powers bore challenges that surpassed those of all other new or semi-new states in Central Europe after the Great War. The process was not restricted to establishing new institutions and had to be achieved in the face of extreme economic problems resulting from the backwardness of large parts of the country, dramatic war devastations, and the infrastructure problems caused by the partitions.⁷ In addition, significant parts of the former academic, technical, and administrative elites had left the country, returning to Russia, Austria, and Germany.⁸

All these problems converged in the cities, even more so as, particularly in eastern Poland, different processes coincided that had unfolded consecutively in Western Europe. In Poland the main phase of urbanization was still in full swing in the interwar period.⁹ This means that city expansion—similar for example to Berlin in 1920—was not only a measure that “changed administrative competences, but not the mode of urban life.”¹⁰ In fact, at least in Warsaw the very structure of the city was still shapeable to an extent no longer true for Western capitals in the twentieth century.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the prospects for the growth of Warsaw seemed good. Ferdinand de Lesseps, the builder of the Suez Canal, even predicted that Warsaw would become the biggest European city in the twentieth century “due to the fact that this is the place where east meets west and where the most colossal exchange to be imagined, the exchange between the continents,

⁷ It is estimated that due to war damages in the years between 1914 and 1921, 1,837,000 buildings were destroyed on the territory of the Second Polish Republic. Minorski, *Polska nowatorska*. On the general economic problems, see Tur-nock, *Economy of East Central Europe*, and Berend, *Decades of Crisis*.

⁸ Loose, “How to Run a State,” 145–59.

⁹ In 1925 the degree of urbanization in Poland was only 30 percent, compared to 50 percent in the Weimar Republic. Cf. Żarnowski, *Polska 1918–1939*. On the different paths of urbanization in Europe, see the introduction to Lenger et al., *Die europäische Stadt*.

¹⁰ Peukert, *Weimarer Republik*, 181–82.

would take place.”¹¹ Exaggerated as it may seem from today’s perspective, at the time it was not a stand-alone opinion. Polish statistics estimated in 1912 that Warsaw’s populace would grow from some 850,000 to 4.6 million in the fifty years to come—thus quintupling.¹²

Both, the reality of growth and the expectation of progress, originated from Warsaw’s geographical position within the Russian Empire and the huge accessible market.¹³ But the massive problems Warsaw faced in the interwar period largely stemmed from its Russian period. Warsaw’s status as a fortified city with almost no autonomy had prohibited significant and planned enlargements (as opposed to uncontrolled expansion) and resulted in a massive overcrowding of the city.¹⁴ With more than 100,000 inhabitants per square kilometer in its central districts, Warsaw featured the densest population in Europe on the eve of World War I.¹⁵ Its average of almost four persons occupying one room was unmatched, at least in Central Europe. The quality of housing moreover was poor, as was the state of infrastructure. In addition, the former garrison and commercial city had to be transformed into a capital on a European scale, in particular in view of the challenging international situation of the new Polish state striving for legitimacy.

In this situation of extreme pressure to solve urban problems and a coinciding lack of established experts and knowledge, the new discipline of town planning inevitably gained tremendous significance.¹⁶ Tellingly, the first measures to improve the urban situation,

¹¹ Majewski, *Warszawa nieodbudowana*.

¹² Martyn, “Emerging Metropolises,” 140–42. General information on the development of the populace is provided in Strzelecki, “Ludność Warszawy,” 9–28; Drozdowski, “Skład i struktura,” 29–59.

¹³ Cf. Martyn, “Emerging Metropolises,” 140–42.

¹⁴ Even in 1936 the average number of people occupying an apartment was 3.7 compared to 2.1 in Berlin and 1.8 in London—the latter both being cities that hardly could claim to have solved their housing problems. According to official statistics, in 1927 five persons occupied an average living space of 22 square meters. Turowski, “From Workers’ Estates,” 48–60.

¹⁵ Malisz, “Functional Warsaw,” 254–69; Wynot, *Warsaw between the World Wars*.

¹⁶ On the late development of town planning as a discipline, see Ward, *Planning the Twentieth-Century City*.

initiated by Tadeusz Tołwiński, were already taken under the German occupation during World War I.¹⁷ In 1916 the Warsaw Polytechnic reopened, featuring a new faculty of architecture.¹⁸ At the same time, a first sketch for a master plan of Warsaw was compiled as an attempt to consolidate the highly fractured city. In 1919 a commission of both national and local officials was formed with the task of matching the master plans and the much more complex reality.¹⁹

Based on the master plans, town planner Stanisław Różański developed a “master scheme” in 1927, which was to serve as a model for the whole country.²⁰ Różański, who was trained in the United States, became head of the Regional Planning Office for Greater Warsaw in 1930 and developed the first regional planning scheme for Poland—one of the first in Europe.²¹ He next advanced to the position of head of the newly established Warsaw Planning Office, one of the largest urban planning bodies in Europe, which provided him with the means to launch his ambitious plans.

Already those responsible for the first master plan were able to build on new planning instruments, which had been developed in the previous two decades in Western Europe and the United States.²² Moreover, it is striking to note that Różański’s new schemes, in tune

¹⁷ Their main task was the comprehensive statistical evaluation of the given state. Szczypiorski, “Samorząd Warszawy,” 83–116. On Tołwiński see Kotaszewicz, “Tadeusz Tołwiński,” 273–86; Czyzewski, “Town and Regional Planning,” 38–47.

¹⁸ Noakowski, “Powstanie wydziału architektury,” 29–32.

¹⁹ Koło Architektów w Warszawie, *Uwagi do szkicu wstępnego planu regulacyjnego miasta st. Warszawy*, Warsaw (1916); see also Wynot, *Warsaw between the World Wars*; Tadeusz Tołwiński, “Uwagi o szkicowym projekcie zabudowania Wielkiej Warszawy,” *Przegląd Techniczny* 43, no. 18 (1917): 214.

²⁰ Poland was the first European state, with the exception of the Soviet Union, that established a national policy of town, regional, and countrywide planning: Wynot, *Warsaw between the World Wars*, 162.

²¹ Stanisław Różański, “Plan ogólny wielkiej Warszawy,” *Architektura i Budownictwo* 4, no. 11 (1928): 410–15.

²² Tadeusz Tołwiński studied, for example, at Karlsruhe Polytechnic. Klain, “City Planning in Warsaw,” 112–27. For the reception of international examples see Józef Jankowski, “Regulacja miast i planowanie regionalne w związku z budownictwem mieszkaniowym. (Sprawozdanie z międzynarodowego kongresu urbanistycznego w Wiedniu, 9 września 1926),” *Architektura i Budownictwo* 1, no. 3 (1927): 30–33.

with the state of the art in urban planning, directly addressed the deficits of the prewar era—they made use of the huge, largely state-owned open space beyond the northern fortifications of the city, for example.²³ Stressing the scale of urban problems, Róžański was quick to highlight the potential of modern urban planning methods. From the beginning Róžański, who placed a strong emphasis on publicizing his convictions, positioned Warsaw among the foremost European capitals like London, Vienna, Paris, and Berlin in order to stress deficits, but also to enlist support for his planning efforts.²⁴



Figure 9.1. International importance of the capital city of Warsaw.

Source: Stanisław Róžański, "Plan ogólny wielkiej Warszawy,"

Architektura i Budownictwo 4, no. 11 (1928): 410–38, 410.

²³ Temporarily, three-fifths of all newly erected apartment buildings in Warsaw were constructed in the northern district of Żoliborz. Cegielski, "Budownictwo mieszkaniowe," 117–40. On the Nowy Żoliborz estates, see Heyman, *Nowy Żoliborz*.

²⁴ Stanisław Róžański, "Plan ogólny wielkiej Warszawy," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 4, no. 11 (1928): 410–38; Edgar Norwerth, "Kompozycja w regulacji Warszawy," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 5, no. 3 (1929): 84–94. See also Róžański's own account some forty years later: Stanisław Róžański, "Planowanie przestrzenne Warszawy 1916–1939," 321–46.

Róžański pointed out a number of factors which, in his eyes, defined Warsaw's development and held enormous chances. First, the geographical connections that turned the city into an international center of trade, supported by the strong presence of industrial companies, and second, the city's status as capital of Poland, including its representational function and its role as a cultural, administrative, and military center.²⁵ Both factors resulted in high population density, which in turn caused three further problems: housing shortage, urban hygiene, and traffic.

Although the second and third point, in Róžański's view, did not deserve special attention, the geographical setup was decisive. Warsaw was a center of material and immaterial exchange from west to east via railway, air traffic, and waterways. Yet contemporary Warsaw, Róžański argued, was not up to the challenges posed and chances provided by this situation.

In sum, one can identify four specifics of urban planning in Warsaw until the 1930s:

1. There was an intermingling of state and municipal activity with a strong bias toward the central authorities. In the years after 1918, federal institutions like the Ministry of Public Works became and remained major players in all town planning initiatives in Warsaw. This had structural reasons (the lack of a well-developed self-administration, the top-down reestablishment of the Polish state in 1918, and the state-centered tradition of the Russian Empire), but also resulted from the character of Warsaw as the capital and most dynamic city of the new state. In 1925 Oskar Sosnowski, founder of the Union of Polish Urbanists (Towarzystwo Urbanistów Polskich) and head of the department for Polish architecture at Warsaw Polytechnic, argued that although Warsaw-based architects (Koło Architektów) had taken the first initiative to seize the urban chances of Warsaw, it was now up to the government to create the conditions for a "policy of recovery" (*polityka uzdrowienia*) and a rational develop-

²⁵ Drozdowski, "Die Rolle Warschau," 243–67.

ment.²⁶ The Piłsudski regime, established under the slogan *Sanacja* (healing) in 1926, directly and significantly intervened several times in order to mitigate the dramatic housing situation.²⁷ What is clear here is the exceptionally strong link between political legitimacy and tackling the capital's dramatic urban problems.²⁸ This link was perhaps most evident in the case of Starzyński.²⁹

2. Warsaw's urban extension quadrupled between 1916 and 1939,³⁰ which exceeds the developments of any other Central European city of this size. While the populations of Prague, Berlin, or Budapest grew only slightly, the number of inhabitants almost doubled in Warsaw from some 700,000 after the Russian retreat in 1915 to around 1,300,000 and 1,900,000 within the so-called Metropolitan Complex in 1939.³¹ On the one hand, exceptional growth posed challenges for the state power in the region. On the other, it was the driving force for the city's dynamic development.
3. This both resulted in and promoted huge planning efforts and cemented the strong and specific role of planning in Warsaw, which had a tendency toward sweeping measures. To some extent this preference for the grand design might have been influenced, at least until the mid-1930s, by the severe lack of detailed information, which was part and parcel of role models

²⁶ Oskar Sosnowski, *Powstanie, układ i cechy charakterystyczne sieci ulicznej na obszarze wielkiej Warszawy* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Zakładu Architektury Polskiej Politechniki Warszawskiej, 1930); Oskar Sosnowski, "Zakład Architektury Polskiej Politechniki Warszawskiej," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 2, no. 5 (1925/26): 3–23; Miłobędzki, "Oskar Sosnowski," 131–38.

²⁷ The latter was seen as a potential source of political upheaval, causing the regime to provide considerable resources for the solution of urbanistic problems in Warsaw. From 1919 on, housing was part of the annual national budget. See Wynot, *Warsaw between the World Wars*, 176–77.

²⁸ Ibid., 162–72. On local politics, see Kamieniecki, *Historycy i politycy warszawscy*.

²⁹ See the pertaining reflection by Starzyński in Jankiewicz et al., "Tradycje urbanistyczne Warszawy." On Starzyński's four-year-plan for the development of Warsaw: Drozdowski, *Starzyński*. Generally on capital urbanism as a field to attain political legitimacy: Sonne, *Representing the State*, 29–49.

³⁰ Jankiewicz et al., "Tradycje urbanistyczne Warszawy," 34–59.

³¹ Wynot, *Warsaw between the World Wars*, 159, 175.

- like urban planning in Amsterdam after 1918.³² Not least of all for this reason, implementation proved to be a constant problem. The conception of new plans and the compilation of instruments for their implementation at best went hand in hand. It is also because of this twofold task of planning and assessment that the planning bodies established in Warsaw from about 1930 reached a size and also a professional quality only matched by very few other European metropolitan cities. By 1939 the Warsaw Planning Office had enlisted more than 400 employees, most of them engineers.³³
4. All these developments have to be seen against the background of—and in strong interconnection with—the international discussion on town planning.³⁴ This resulted in the use of state-of-the-art planning instruments like zoning and green belts for tackling basic challenges like the largely unorganized urban sprawl in Warsaw. It also included innovative elements like the *Superdzielnice* (super districts), self-contained residential districts intended to help decentralize administration, commercial activity, and traffic. Last, it is important to note an early orientation toward regional planning.³⁵

Although it contains new and innovative elements and is unique in its wide range and broad claim of problem solving, what can be called the Róžański tradition of urban planning still remained within the mainstream of international discussion and development. The main goals were at the same time a cleaning up of the urban pattern and catching up.³⁶ After all, Róžański was a civil servant

³² Somer, *The Functional City*.

³³ Jankiewicz et al., “Tradycje urbanistyczne Warszawy,” 34–59.

³⁴ See also Rychliński, *Wybór pism*. For background information see Sutcliffe, *Towards the Planned City*; Albers, *Zur Entwicklung der Stadtplanung in Europa*; Saunier, “Transatlantic Connections,” 11–24, http://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/docs/00/16/83/09/PDF/transatlantic_connections_IMS_HAL.pdf (accessed 6 April 2014).

³⁵ “Planowanie regionalne w okręgu warszawskim,” *DOM* 9 (1938): 3–56.

³⁶ Kazimierz Saski, “Planowanie Miast w Polsce w Okresie Powojennym,” *Architektura i Budownictwo* 2, no. 6 (1925/26): 4–28; Faryna-Paszkiewicz, “Reprezentacyjna architektura,” 203–13.

who constantly had to negotiate between local and national authorities, thus leveling out all too radical propositions. What is even more characteristic is that both Róžański's and Sosnowski's elaborations on Warsaw's future share a common feature: they assume the quasi-natural metropolitan character of Warsaw, which so far was, in their eyes, only thwarted by urbanistic incompetence and missed opportunities, namely of the Russian administration before World War I. Both urbanists stressed the geographic assets of Warsaw, its central position at the intersection of international traffic routes, and its dynamic development. Warsaw was, as Sosnowski concluded in a characteristic statement, a capital city in a "state of potentiality" (*stanie potencjonalnym*).³⁷

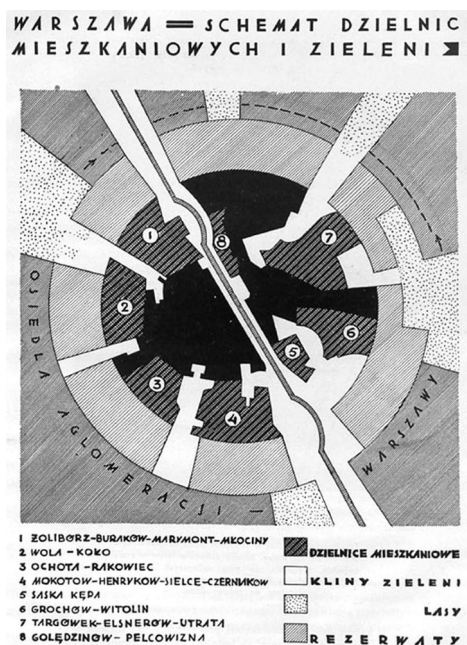


Figure 9.2. The scheme of the residential areas and green areas for the plan of the capital city of Warsaw. Source: Stanisław Róžański, "Plan ogólny wielkiej Warszawy," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 4, no. 11 (1928): 410–38, 410.

³⁷ Oskar Sosnowski, *Powstanie, układ i cechy charakterystyczne sieci ulicznej na obszarze wielkiej Warszawy* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Zakładu Architektury Polskiej Politechniki Warszawskiej, 1930).

Architects, Other Players, and the Communication of Architecture in Poland

Róžański's example combines some of the most striking characteristics of architects and urban planners in Warsaw. Undoubtedly, the planning needs in reaction to a complex urban crisis offered enormous chances for architects. Warsaw was not—particularly in comparison to cities in Czechoslovakia—a simple success story of the modern movement.³⁸ But one can clearly discern the rise of a particular brand of architects who were more than mere building experts, who had a theoretical and urbanist capacity and an international background typical of the modern movement.

Architects gained impressively both in numbers and in relevance in Poland between 1918 and 1939.³⁹ However, it was a certain type that was particularly present in the urban planning debates of the late 1920s and 1930s. Such “new” types like Edgar Norwerth,⁴⁰ Szymon Syrkus, or Stanisław and Barbara Brukalscy reacted to new technical trends, were open to the social dimension of architecture, were ready and able to publicly explain their ideas, and were internationally well connected and very aware of recent international trends and projects.⁴¹

Another type worth mentioning is represented by Teodor Toeplitz and Stanisław Tołwiński. Both were instrumental in the foundation and development of *Warszawska Spółdzielnia Mieszkaniowa*, the

³⁸ Anna, *Das Bauhaus im Osten*; Anděl et al., *New Vision*; Nerdinger, *Zlin*; Klingan et al., *A Utopia of Modernity*.

³⁹ From 169 in 1919 to 1,042 in 1939, see Minorski, *Polska nowatorska*, 183; see also Barucki, *Fragmenty stuletniej historii*; Zachwatowicz, *Warszawska szkoła architektury*.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Edgar Norwerth, “Edukacja Architektoniczna w Rosji Dzisiejszej,” *Architektura i Budownictwo* 2, no. 5 (1925/26): 26–33; Edgar Norwerth, “Wystawa Międzynarodowa Architektury Nowoczesnej,” *Architektura i Budownictwo* 1, no. 4 (1925/26): 37–38; Edgar Norwerth, “Przesłanki socjologiczne architektury współczesnej,” *Droga* 1–2 (1927): 108–13. On Norwerth: Rotkiewicz, “Wielki samotnik,” 2–4.

⁴¹ A. Gravier, “Zjazd Międzynarodowego Kongresu Architektów,” *Architektura i Budownictwo* 2, no. 12 (1926): 22–27; Kazimierz Saski, “Sprawy urbanistyczne na Międzynarodowym Kongresie mieszkaniowym i budowy miast w Paryżu r. 1928,” *Architektura i Budownictwo* 4, no. 10 (1928): 367–75.

most important housing cooperative in Warsaw.⁴² Tellingly, at different stages both became members of CIAM and belonged to the small group of nonarchitects within the organization. This was due to their specific qualification as intermediary figures between architecture, economy, and general social reform. They provided the statistics and data, often from an international context, for the far-reaching projects aiming to solve not only architectural problems in the narrower sense. But they also organized funds and established contacts with the political decision makers.⁴³ Again, it is apparent how the pronounced economic and social crisis in Warsaw and the rise of architects and town planners of a certain strand went hand in hand.

If one looks at the journals *Dom, Osiedle, Mieszkanie* (DOM) and in particular *Architektura i Budownictwo* (AiB), both founded in the second half of the 1920s, one finds various examples of this trend. In comparison to the respective German journals, the proportion of international references in AiB was much higher, and not only in the extensive sections specially devoted to foreign journals.⁴⁴ One can also distinguish an extreme preference for the technical and social dimension of architecture, including in particular housing,⁴⁵ while questions of style played a proportionally less important role.⁴⁶

This international orientation had different reasons. One of them was the trivial fact that almost all eminent planners and architects of

⁴² Mazur, "Żoliborz—dzielnica obietnic," 140–63; Caumanns, "Mietskasernen und 'Gläserne Häuser,'" 205–24.

⁴³ See Teodor Toeplitz, "Nowe sposoby budowania," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 4, no. 4 (1928): 129–47. See also Stanisław Totwiński's autobiography, *Wspomnienia, 1895–1939* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwa Naukowe, 1970), wherein he reflects on the role of Polish architects in CIAM. See also Chyra-Rolicz, *Stanisław Totwiński*.

⁴⁴ See, e.g., the series on contemporary Dutch architecture (AiB 1930), Swiss architecture (AiB 1930), or German sport facilities architecture (AiB, issue 4 [1930]). Le Corbusier's *urbanisme* was reviewed twice in AiB (issues 10 and 11 [1925/26]). The Weissenhof exhibition was also covered extensively two times in 1927. (See also the chapter by Elitza Stanoeva in this volume.)

⁴⁵ Aleksander Raniecki, "Dział Mieszkaniowy Wystawy 'Mieszkanie i Miasto,'" *Architektura i Budownictwo* 2, no. 6 (1925/26): 29–35.

⁴⁶ See in particular the journal DOM. See also the examples in AiB, issues 2 and 3 (1928).

the interwar period received an international education because of the absence of a Polish state and the lack of relevant Polish institutions before 1918. Those architects working in Poland after 1918 and born before 1890 had been educated at more than forty different architectural schools, most of them abroad.⁴⁷ This was also true for the graduates of the architecture faculty of Warsaw Polytechnic. Its curriculum reflected different international trends of architectural and urbanist training.⁴⁸ A second reason for international collaboration was the scarcity of established knowhow.

At least as important was the specific Polish situation after 1918. As a reestablished nation, Poland needed legitimacy. In particular the new/old capital was a showcase that had to prove progress when compared to such established national centers as Berlin, Paris, or London.⁴⁹ For this reason it made more sense and was more effective to employ international references in Warsaw and Poland than, say, Paris or London, although the mechanism was certainly also common in other places. Particularly the highly charged debate on housing depended on comparisons with examples from other countries.⁵⁰

After all, urbanism—as in other places—was a highly publicized matter that besides journals, newspapers, and pamphlets relied strongly on exhibitions as a forum to advance its goals. The first Róžański plan was presented at the national exhibition in Poznań in 1929.

⁴⁷ Minorski, *Polska nowatorska*. This was, in many respects, a general phenomenon in East-Central Europe. See Kohlrausch et al., “Expert Cultures in Central Eastern Europe,” 9–30.

⁴⁸ Kłosiewicz, “Modernizm polski,” 84–95; Zachwatowicz, *Warszawska szkoła architektury*.

⁴⁹ See the pertaining reflection by Starzyński in Jankiewicz et al., “Tradycje urbanistyczne Warszawy.” See also Czesław Olszewski, *Warszawa Nowoczesna. Fotografie z Lat Trzydziestych XX wieku, Warszawa 2012* (Warszawa: Raster, 2012).

⁵⁰ See Szymon Syrkus, “Fabrykacja Osiedli,” *Architektura i Budownictwo* 4, no. 8 (1928): 277–98. For the example of traffic, see Tadeusz Pogorski, “Zagadnienia komunikacyjne wielkiego miasta,” *Architektura i Budownictwo* 3, no. 7 (1927): 218–25.

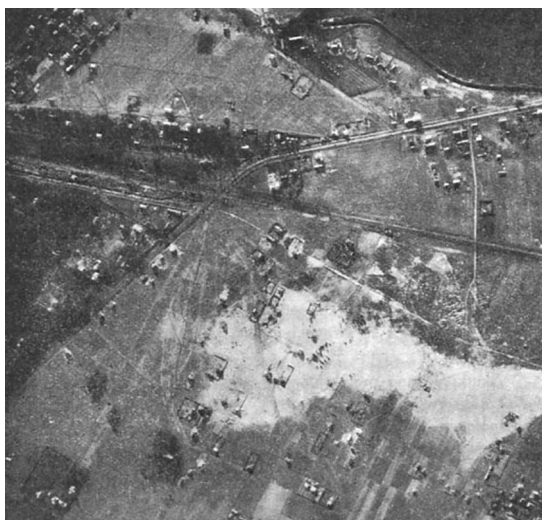


Figure 9.3. Absence of a regional plan for the gradual development of a district.

Source: Stanisław Różański, *Zagadnienia rozwoju Warszawy i jej regionu*, Warszawa 1935, 9.

After Stefan Starzyński had become president of Warsaw in 1934, he tried to emphasize the dramatic reality as well as future prospects in order to enlist support for his far-reaching plans—in exhibitions such as “Warsaw yesterday, today, tomorrow,” and especially for the planned world exhibition in Warsaw in 1943.⁵¹ In AiB, new plans for the capital, accompanied by the excessive use of often very suggestive illustrations, were a common feature.

Communicating architecture in such exhibitions highlights the fact that technical planning and the communication of planning

⁵¹ On the exhibition “Warsaw yesterday...,” see Jarosław Tribuś, *Warszawa Niezaistniała. Niezrealizowane projekty urbanistyczne i architektoniczne dwudziestolecia międzywojennego* (Warsaw: Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego, 2012), 262–75. For the Poznań exhibition, see AiB 4, issue 11 (1928). For another widely received exhibition, see Wynot, *Warsaw between the World Wars*, 166. For Starzyński’s intentional use of pictures of slum-like areas in order to pressure for urban renewal, see Karolina Lewandowska, ed., *Dokumentalistki: Polskie fotografie XX wieku* (Warsaw: BOSZ, [1968] 2008). For the plan of the world exhibition in Warsaw, see Olszewski, “Architektura Warszawy 1919–1939,” 287–320.

cannot be separated and that this communication was of utmost importance to gain support beyond the profession.⁵² It is also interesting to see—beyond the international integration of AiB—that the journal was founded with the deliberate aim of linking the professional discourse to the new capital Warsaw and to claim new tasks for architects in fields like hygiene, health, sport, and housing reform.⁵³

Warszawa Funkcjonalna

In this environment modernist architects and urbanists drew up a plan that reflects almost all of the characteristics outlined so far. This was one of the most remarkable planning documents of the interwar period with the catchy and internationally easily adaptable title *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*.⁵⁴ Its authors were the avant-garde architect Szymon Syrkus and the urban planner Jan Olaf Chmielewski.⁵⁵ Both were members of CIAM, which was founded in 1928 by Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius, among others.⁵⁶ Two weeks after CIAM I convened in La Sarraz, the congress's general secretary Sigfried Giedion invited the Polish architects Syrkus and Józef Szanajca to collaborate in CIAM's "central committee"—CIRPAC (Comité International pour la Résolution des Problèmes de l'Architecture Contemporaine). Syrkus and Szanajca had con-

⁵² In 1954, the writer Leopold Tyrmand stressed the visionary value of the Warsaw's exhibition. Tyrmand, *Dziennik 1954*.

⁵³ Raniecki, "Dział Mieszkaniowy"; Alfred Lauterbach, "Zagadnienia Wielkiego Miasta," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 1, no. 2 (1925/26): 15–23; Śleboda, "Architektura sportowa dwudziestolecia międzywojennego w Polsce," 147–87.

⁵⁴ Jan Chmielewski, Szymon Syrkus, *Warszawa funkcjonalna* (Warszawa: Towarzystwo Urbanistów Polskich, 1934). The text is now available in a very instructive new and commented edition: Chmielewski et al., *Warszawa funkcjonalna*.

⁵⁵ Besides Róžański, Chmielewski was one of the main advocates of far-reaching ideas for the systematic use of land and speaker of the leading group of urban planners—U. On Chmielewski, see Kotarbinski, "The Developing Career," 6–12; on Syrkus see the work by his wife Helena Syrkus, *Ku idei osiedla społecznego*.

⁵⁶ On CIAM in general, see Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse*; Steinmann, *CIAM*.

vinced CIAM celebrities with their contribution to the competition for the League of Nations building. In the years to come, the Polish CIAM members formed one of the largest and most active regional groups. During the thematic CIAM II in 1929 in Frankfurt, which focused on the “minimum dwelling,” Polish contributions from cooperative housing organizations served as examples, and again at the CIAM III congress in Brussels in the following year.⁵⁷

In particular these later solutions developed by Syrkus and his wife Helena sparked great interest. Gropius, for example, had these plans analyzed by the Reichsforschungsgesellschaft für Wirtschaftlichkeit im Bau- und Wohnungswesen (Reich Research Society for Economic Viability in Construction and Housing).⁵⁸ What intrigued CIAM members from the West most were the radical attempts to find solutions to the dramatic housing situation in Warsaw, in particular to its social dimension.⁵⁹ For this very reason, in turn, international attempts to rationalize housing construction possessed an extremely high relevance for Poland—often even more so than for the countries where these solutions had originally been developed.⁶⁰

The connection between the specific situation in Poland and the solutions offered by CIAM is even more pronounced in the discussion on the functional city, that is a city ordered according to functional criteria and divided into “zones” for dwelling, work, transportation, and recreation—one of the big topics in the discourse on urban planning in the 1930s.⁶¹ CIAM intensively discussed the topic from 1931 on and especially at the 1933 CIAM IV congress in Athens. Under the heading of “the functional city,” the regional groups presented thirty-four cities, one of which was Warsaw.

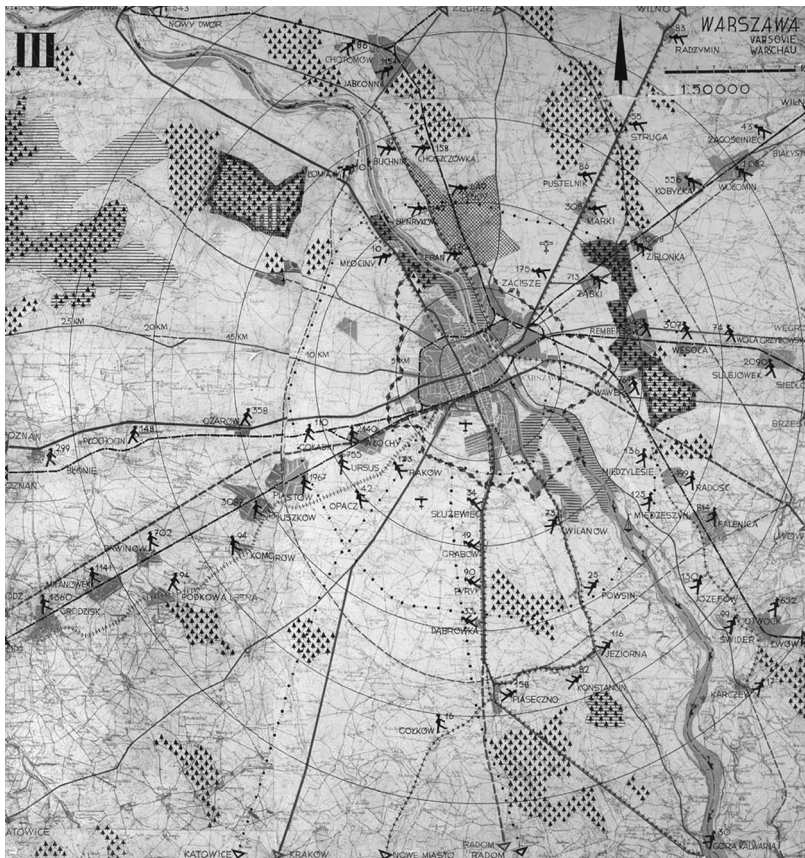
⁵⁷ Roguska, “The Radical Avant-garde,” 17–18.

⁵⁸ Czaplinska-Archer, “Polish Architecture,” 37–44.

⁵⁹ Cf. Czermer et al., *Avant-garde polonaise*.

⁶⁰ Roguska, “The Radical Avant-garde.” The newly erected apartment buildings in the northern districts of Warsaw served as model projects to test ideas that were discussed at the CIAM congresses. See Klain, “City Planning in Warsaw.”

⁶¹ Le Corbusier, *La ville radieuse. Eléments d’une doctrine d’urbanisme pour l’équipement de la civilisation machiniste*: Paris, Geneve, Rio de Janeiro (Boulogne, Seine: Éditions de l’architecture aujourd’hui, 1935). See also Hilpert, *Le Corbusiers “Charta von Athen.”*



Map 9.1. Map of Warsaw for CIAM IV Congress; courtesy of CIAM-archive, gta archive, Zurich.

The *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* plan was, on the one hand, a product of Chmielewski's planning background. On the other, it showed Syrkus's talent to suggestively place topics in public discourse and to press ahead with his vision at the interface of politics, architecture, and the public. In this sense *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* provides a perfect example for the connection between the Polish situation with its specific problems and the international discussion of architecture and urban planning. In particular, the concept reacted to the idea of the functional city and thus served as an extreme example of the trends described above.

Tellingly, the text starts off with architects rather than buildings or an urban pattern: "The work of architects is based on projecting, that is the planned conception of the future." The authors claim that in order to reestablish this function the "crippling of the profession," caused by the economic needs of the day, would have to be overcome. Throughout, the authors argue in favor of a planned economy with functionalist urbanism as its logical consequence and architects in a leading position. It seems justified to describe this vision as a socialist city, though not in the Soviet sense.

In a next characteristic step, Chmielewski and Syrkus, the latter closely connected to the political left, declared that this conclusion in no way derived from their local conditions, but rather from their collaboration with CIAM and its congresses in 1928, 1929, and 1933. The authors then distinguish different groups of cities, from which those that are the continuous objects of change based on various factors attract their attention. What they were looking for in the example of Warsaw are the factors and conditions of growth and the ability to cope with a crisis situation. They regarded the functional planning of dealing with these aspects essential, but at the same time only considered this possible when distinguishing between fixed and dynamic or changing factors. In stressing movement and consequently distinguishing between static and adjustable criteria, the city appeared in flux. As fixed factors, the authors mainly regarded:

- Warsaw's position at the intersection of intercontinental traffic arteries (neglecting the political realities east and west of the country);
- its combination of a developed industrial structure and easy access to commodities;
- its function as political center and center of consumption.

The next decisive and new feature of the concept was its vision of the city on a regional and even national and European level. Numerous illustrations underscored the notion of the metropolitan organism based on the directions of traffic and overcoming the old city's deformation of the natural traffic flow. In this they argued against what they perceived as the "tsarist impairment of the city's

backbone,” but in particular against the mainstream planning that still dominated and was, in their eyes, caught up in the flawed urban pattern of the past.⁶²

Based on the logic of traffic and equipped with the toolkit of functional city planning, Chmielewski and Syrkus envisioned the differences between town and countryside to be leveled by means of a broad zone branded *Warszawa Maksymalna* or Wmax, stretching some 100 kilometers north to south and east to west. They developed a new and easy-to-communicate system to depict statistical information, in particular in its dynamics. Warsaw was consequently presented as a city at the intersection of transcontinental traffic lines: “In our conception the scale of the region is interconnected to the scale of central Poland, Europe, and even the world in such a way that on pressing the key Żerań [one of the places in the concept to be developed] we hear the echo of Tłuszcz and Żyrardów—Moscow and Paris, and at the same time Modlin, Czersk, Stockholm, and Suez.”⁶³

The architects planned urban infrastructure at the intersections of major traffic arteries, which was meant to structure the wild settlements outside the inner city. They placed particular emphasis on establishments for the community.⁶⁴ This was regarded as essential for an active redefinition of the city and the claim to deeply changing the city.

Syrkus and Chmielewski admitted that the vision of a functionally organized Warsaw was utopian as long as real estate remained predominantly in private hands. The vision, however, should not entail neglecting the social conditions: “We do not want, like the technocrats, to get carried away by technical enthusiasm in order to forget the crisis, unemployment, and the homelessness of the masses. We know all too well that at this very moment, when production and consumption are in such disorder, and when the path-breaking social forces unfold such a dynamic, we can only theoretically prepare Warsaw for the future—the functional city.”⁶⁵ Inter-

⁶² Chmielewski et al., *Warszawa funkcjonalna*.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Malisz, “Functional Warsaw”; Czyżewski, “Town and Regional Planning.”

⁶⁵ Chmielewski et al., *Warszawa funkcjonalna*.

estingly, however, and probably for the sake of the adaptability of the concept, there is no allusion to a specific political system.⁶⁶



Figure 9.4. Zones of exploitation on the territory of Warszawa Max.
Source: Jan Chmielewski and Szymon Syrkus, *Warszawa funkcjonalna*,
Warszawa: Towarzystwo Urbanistów Polskich, 1934, Fig X.

In order to illustrate what they intended, the authors referred to Le Corbusier's *La Ville Radieuse* and Nikolai A. Miliutin's *Socgorod*. While taking into account obvious connections to Arturo Soria y Mata's *ciudad lineal* (1882) and Miliutin's *continuous city*

⁶⁶ There was, however, a positive view on a "planned economy" (ibid.).

(1930) as well as the plans for a *Stadtlandschaft* developed simultaneously for Hamburg, Bremen, and Stettin, Syrkus and Chmielewski undertook something new.⁶⁷ It is not so much the optimistic assessment of the development of the city, shifting between vision and hubris that is remarkable. Rather, it is striking how easily the attitude to be modern went hand in hand with the internationalist pretense of the study. The study gained its radical character—and the fascination it exerted beyond Poland's borders—from the dramatic gap between a critical urban situation and aspirations to accomplish a new European hybrid city.

This fascination could not have developed without the international sounding board the CIAM formed for Syrkus and Chmielewski. CIAM functioned as a producer of urban planning schemes, as a manifestation of the will to spread the idea of modern architecture, still diffuse in its outlook, and finally as a marketplace, an exchange of knowledge with a transnational structure.⁶⁸

It seems as though the Polish group was more than others willing to adapt the main ideas proposed at Athens, namely that architecture had to be at its core functional in character and that the chaotic use of land had to be overcome in favor of a collective land use scheme.⁶⁹ Based on material presented in Athens, the Polish group was the only one—with the partial exception of Barcelona—to develop a concrete concept for a functional urban region within the framework of CIAM. Hence, *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* became the main topic at the CIRPAC meeting in London in 1934.⁷⁰ Le Corbusier considered *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* a new step in the planning of huge areas, in particular because of the so-called focusing method, applied to increasing scales (district, city, country). Due to

⁶⁷ In the 1930s, Chmielewski used the term *Warszawski Zespół Miejski*, which can be translated as “town-complex Warsaw.”

⁶⁸ CIAM only covers one section of the rapid internationalization of architecture in the interwar period. In particular the constructivist movement needs to be mentioned here. See Ingberman, *ABC*, and for the Polish case, see Stanislawski, “Die Bemühungen um eine internationale Künstlersolidarität,” 248–54.

⁶⁹ On the central role Syrkus played within CIAM, see Chionne, “Blok e Praesens,” 157–98.

⁷⁰ In addition to the members of the CIRPAC board, Raymond Unwin, Frederic Osborn, Patrick Abercrombie, and Hans Bernoulli participated in the meeting.

the fact that the study provided urban planners with far more tools than the Charta of Athens had foreseen, CIRPAC recommended *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* as a model study for large-scale urban and regional planning.⁷¹ In a resolution signed by Gropius, Josep Lluís Sert, Le Corbusier, and Wells Coates, CIRPAC tried to pressure the president of Warsaw into implementing the scheme.⁷²

Apparently, the study aroused such an intense response because Poland was presented as a kind of tabula rasa on which those more radical schemes that remained theory in the West could be practically realized. During the CIAM III discussion on low- versus high-rise buildings, Syrkus had vehemently advised against dealing with existing cities at all. In a discussion statement, Syrkus declared in the name of the Polish group: "I must stress that for many cities it [the discussion about the functional city] is not about utopian projects, planned in the blue. For us, for example, it is deeply needed, and if a functional city will come into existence, this may happen soon, and would then no longer be a utopia."⁷³ Indeed, in Warsaw many things were still in flux that were already fixed in the more developed Western European big cities, and could thus no longer be objects of functionalist planning. Moreover, the social dimension of architecture that was pronounced in all CIAM discussions was more urgent in Poland than in the West.

What comes to the fore here is CIAM as an organization that not only worked toward an exchange of knowledge, but also of reputation and appreciation. Local problems could advance to internationally recognized case studies. Conversely, international recognition could be channeled back into the local struggle for chances to realize one's concepts and ideas. What CIAM offered was particularly attractive considering the Polish situation. More so than other are-

⁷¹ The board decided to have the document translated into English, German, and French. In 1935 a Spanish edition came out. Malisz, "Functional Warsaw," 257–58; Steinmann, *CIAM*. An in-depth record of the discussion is provided in Syrkus, "Warszawa funkcjonalna modelem dla CIAM," 78–80.

⁷² The letter to Marian Zyndram-Kościałkowski is reprinted in Syrkus, *Ku idei osiedla społecznego*, 159.

⁷³ Steinmann, *CIAM*, 100–101, quotation on 116; see also Kohlrausch, "Die CIAM und die Internationalisierung der Architektur," <http://www.europa.clio-online.de/2007/Article=258> (accessed 6 April 2014), 1–7.

nas, CIAM provided the chance to employ the glamor of internationality at home. This became apparent already in the considerations to organize a CIAM congress in Warsaw. Syrkus stressed financial problems, but explained: "This is a matter of prestige for our country—but also of the prestige of the congress which needs to be excellently organized." Explicitly hinting at the economy of prestige, Syrkus stated: "Our authorities declare the arrival of Le Corbusier a *conditio sine qua non*." Finally he explained that Polish CIAM members would know all too well "that Warsaw would not be as attractive a location as the venue of the previous congress." Yet this "would be a case of positive working support [*positive Arbeitsförderung*]." The Poles could establish good working conditions for CIRPAC. Moreover, Syrkus stressed that "our position concerning the current economic situation [the economic crisis] could be of rather great interest for colleagues working under similar conditions."⁷⁴

International solutions were comparably more prestigious in Poland than in the West. This was true both for the label "international" and for the label "modern"—though the two cannot be entirely separated. Polish contributors to CIAM could profit both from the proximity to internationally known experts and from the aspiration of the Polish state to international recognition through ostensibly modern solutions.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Szymon Syrkus (10 April 1933), S. Syrkus an Giedion mit Zusicherungen betreffend den geplanten Kongress in Warschau. Institut für Geschichte und Theorie der Architektur (gta)—ETH Zürich, 42 K 1928–39; Syrkus, Sz. u. H., PL 1933.

⁷⁵ See the examples presented in Mansbach, "Modernism and Nationalist Architecture," 47–54. Piotr Piotrowski speaks of a "nationalization of modernism" in Poland in his "Eine neue Kunst—ein neuer Staat," 51–68. A very concrete aspect of this striving for modern solutions was not to remain at the bottom of European statistics on housing problems. Syrkus, *Spoleczne cele urbanizacji*.

Conclusion

As with most urban plans not directly realized, it is difficult to reconstruct direct influences on future developments by the concept of *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*.⁷⁶ But the gap between theoretical planning and the practical demands of planning “on the ground” diverged immensely. Martin Wagner, the influential *Stadtbaurat* of Berlin before 1933, emphasized the problem in a March 1935 memo to Walter Gropius and the Syrkus couple. Wagner contrasted the top-down approach taken by Chmielewski and Syrkus with his own concept of a thorough analysis of economic conditions, traffic, and so on. In his opinion, the Warsaw town planners failed to explain the “fundamental economic impetus [*Triebkräfte*] of Warsaw’s future development.” Without this information it would be impossible to set up a master plan.⁷⁷ In a similar way, Cornelis van Eesteren, CIAM’s Dutch president, criticized the plan for its lack of thoroughness, while Gropius applauded the strong gesture.⁷⁸

Tellingly, during World War II the concept attained new relevance. The plan itself served as a point of reference for underground planning after 1939 and was itself further developed.⁷⁹ In the astonishingly thorough and far-reaching plans of the Polish underground workshop *Pracownia Architektoniczno-Urbanistyczna* (Workshop of architects and urbanists), the concept served as an important basis.⁸⁰ In view of the ever more brutal destruction of the city—a fact well reflected by the Polish planners—the radical notion of a functional city grew ever more realistic. After 1945, with

⁷⁶ Chmielewski remained a major player in town planning in Warsaw until the German assault on Poland in September 1939—and again became one after 1945. Kotarbinski, “The Developing Career.”

⁷⁷ Martin Wagner (8 March 1935), *Die funktionelle Stadt: Eine kritische Betrachtung zur Klärung des Begriffs der funktionellen Stadt im Anschluss an die Arbeit der polnischen Gruppe “Praesens” und “U” über das städtebauliche Problem von Warschau*. Bauhaus-Archiv, NL Gropius, CIAM-Papers II 129, Mappe 24, 12. Brief an Syrkus plus 7-seitiges Konzept zur funkt. Stadt.

⁷⁸ Isaacs, *Walter Gropius*, 728; Somer, *The Functional City*, 196.

⁷⁹ Syrkus, “*Pracownia Architektoniczno-Urbanistyczna*,” 157–64.

⁸⁰ Gutschow et al., *Vernichtung und Utopie*; Kohlrausch, “Warschau im Zweiten Weltkrieg,” 23–42.

the nationalization of real estate within the city boundaries, at least theoretically a space of opportunities opened up.⁸¹

What Chmielewski and Syrkus did—and in this sense Wagner’s critique somewhat missed this point—was to turn the difficult situation of Warsaw into an advantage. If one wants to assess the plan, one has to understand planning as a communicative act aimed at different audiences. Chmielewski and in particular Syrkus were not primarily interested in solving Warsaw’s specific urban problems. Rather, in entering the existing discussion on the functional city with its codes and developing graphic vocabulary, they successfully established Warsaw on the international map as an example of dramatic urban challenges and radical planning opportunities.⁸² Traffic not only figured as the dynamic momentum of Warsaw’s future growth, but the traffic lines dominating the maps in the concepts directly linked Warsaw with Paris and other European cities. The communicative frame of reference “functional city” offered the opportunity to bring one’s case into the sphere of international attention—much more so than traditional planning instruments, which rather implied a process of catching up in comparison to certain benchmarks. It was no coincidence that Syrkus became a prominent figure in CIAM after presenting the *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* concept and from 1937 on headed the congress’s committee on regional planning.⁸³

Both the history of *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*’s conception and its reception show the power of planning beyond the frame of urbanism in a strictly technical sense. As a communicative statement it was also essential that the concept remained abstract to a large extent in order to be understood beyond Poland. Różański remained within the limits of classical urban planning, with regulation, hygiene, and the representative development of the capital as a leitmo-

⁸¹ Crowley, “Paris or Moscow?” 769–97; Malisz, “Functional Warsaw”; Åman, *Architecture and Ideology*, 126; Szmelter, “Kilka uwag o wątkach planowania,” i–v.

⁸² Vossoughian, “Mapping the Modern City,” 48–65.

⁸³ Helena Syrkus, Szymon Syrkus (1935), Korrespondenz im Hinblick auf CIR-PAC-Treffen in Amsterdam. Funktionelle Stadt, Regionalplanung. Institut für Geschichte und Theorie der Architektur (gta)—ETH Zürich, 42 K 1928–39, Syrkus; Szymon u. Helena, PL 1935.

tif. However, *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* can be seen as an attempt to overcome the process of catching up with Western examples and reversing the situation with a radical vision not conceivable in the already “crystallized”—as Chmielewski and Syrkus put it—cities of the West.

In addition, *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* is a telling example for the rise of a certain strand of architects within the larger context of urban crisis—even if to some extent this meant making up the problems for which one could offer a solution. Again, simplifying a complex matter, one could argue that what Chmielewski and Syrkus proposed was to solve the urban problems of the nineteenth century (regulation, hygiene, housing) with—internationally communicated—planning instruments of the twentieth century. In a less radical way this was already true for the earlier plans by Tołwiński and Różański and certainly helped the impressive rise of urban and regional planning in Poland. Clearly there was a line of continuity in stressing the enormous chances Warsaw would have due to its favorable geographic position if only the right urbanistic instruments were applied. The dynamic of the “potential” city of European relevance was present already in earlier concepts that reacted to the specific challenges of postimperial Warsaw.⁸⁴

While it is important to stress the specifics of Warsaw, it is equally important to highlight that many of the aspects mentioned above were typical for the cities in the region discussed in this volume. It is part of the tragedy of Warsaw’s history that its central position—as Warsaw’s president Stefan Starzyński expressed before being arrested by the Germans in his “I wanted Warsaw to be great” (“*Chciałem by Warszawa była wielka*”) speech—would in a certain sense, with respect to international resonance, only be fulfilled after the immense destruction that followed in the wake of the 1943 and 1944 uprisings, and its subsequent reconstruction.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ This is most visible in a project to devote a whole quarter to Józef Piłsudski. Grzesiuk-Olszewska, “Konkurs na pomnik,” 149–67.

⁸⁵ Drozdowski et al., *Stefan Starzyński*. See also a letter from 1940, which contrasts the widespread neglect of Warsaw before the war with the huge international resonance after the occupation: Madurowicz, *Miejska przestrzeń tożsamości Warszawy*.

10. Capital Modernism in the Baltic Republics: Kaunas, Tallinn, and Riga

Steven A. Mansbach

For many of the new republics that emerged in the wake of World War I, modern architecture served two principal purposes: first, to provide much-needed housing for those dislocated in the shift of national borders and to replace governmental buildings destroyed during the conflict and ensuing civil strife; and second, to assert architecturally the political aspirations of the emergent new states. From Czechoslovakia to Soviet Russia, modernism was employed as the paradigmatic vocabulary of progressive thought and national self-awareness, though seldom univocally. New forms, novel materials, and innovative construction methods were frequently developed through which both functional and representation buildings could be raised—and a new national spirit instantiated. Yet despite shared ambitions and parallel solutions, expressions of modernist architecture varied from place to place, as each newly established nation state endeavored to fashion a distinctive character, one that often creatively blended traditional references and universal claims, or that inventively adapted new building methods to canonical construction materials. The negotiation among past practices, present needs, and projected developments was a highly charged one throughout the lands of the former empires—Romanov, Habsburg, Hohenzollern, and Ottoman. However, both the critical debates and the resultant built environment in the new Baltic republics were among Europe's most incisive intellectually and most striking architecturally. Within the small geographical compass of Europe's northeastern corner, where the modest number of local intelligentsia

belied the grandeur of their ambitions, modernist architecture reached a level of ingeniousness fully the equal of anywhere.

Given the compact size of the intellectual class of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania and their concentration mainly in the capital cities (and a few university towns beyond the metropolis), humanist ideas and reformist programs were passionately debated and intimately exchanged. The divisions within the intelligentsia were less between modernists and traditionalists than among contending factions of forward thinkers, each providing a competing definition of how modern and national architecture should appear and function, and for whom. All agreed, however, that it was the role of artists and architects, abetted by critics, university professors, and governmental functionaries, to articulate and promote a national self-image for both domestic and external political purposes. An assignment of such social, political, and aesthetic magnitude necessarily transformed the role and responsibilities of the modern artist and architect, just as it reconfigured the reception of modernism among its multiple audiences. By focusing on the function of architecture in the newly established, and frequently embattled, Republic of Lithuania during the years following World War I, this chapter raises two important issues.¹ The first is to understand better how Baltic modernism was employed domestically to articulate a national self-image, and how it was simultaneously implemented internationally to signal the respective nation's democratic and republican progress. The second and related matter is to comprehend these complementary national and transnational functions in order to further an effective model by which to investigate the deeper structures of modern art generally. In other words, mapping Baltic modernism—its objectives, limitations, and reception, as exemplified in the Lithuanian Republic, for instance—can reorient and deepen the methodological pathways by which modern art itself might be seen to have been a far more complex, more diverse, and more creative enterprise than conventionally perceived.

¹ For a more elaborate discussion, see Mansbach, "Modernist Architecture and Nationalist Aspiration," 92–111, from which part of the current chapter derives, and Mansbach, *Riga's Capital Modernism*.

For Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania the tremendous destruction wrought by World War I extended into the 1920s. Civil strife among contending political, ethnic, and national groups, as well as intensive battles with German Freikorps, Russian Bolsheviks, and—for Lithuania—Polish irredentist armies completed the material devastation and social dislocation initiated in 1914. Only around 1920 were all three Baltic states able to consolidate their respective independence. Yet national emancipation entailed more than a political undertaking as each new republic endeavored to establish cultural sovereignty as well. In this latter civic enterprise, native artists and architects assumed consummate responsibility. To fulfill this national mission, painters, sculptors, designers, and architects negotiated a creative path between domestic traditions and foreign expectations, between local conditions and international acceptance.² Although all three new states shared similar recent histories and faced parallel contemporary challenges, each pursued a different path in addressing them. Moreover, each differed sharply from the others with regard to the social practices of modernist aesthetics. Of the three, Lithuania pursued the most disparate solution.

Lithuania became functionally independent in July 1920 upon the withdrawal of Bolshevik regiments from Vilnius. But within months, an invasion of Polish forces overpowered the infant Lithuanian Republic and occupied the southeastern third—and historical core—of its territory. The Lithuanian government was thus compelled by military force to retreat from Vilnius,³ the nation's ancient cultural center and newly established political capital and, with the greatest haste, to establish a provisional government in Kaunas, some one hundred kilometers to the west.⁴ Acknowledging

² The function of painters and sculptors differed from that of architects; consequently, the history of painting, sculpture, the graphic artists, and design followed a different line of historical development from that of architecture. For a discussion of the practice of modern painters and sculptors (and to a lesser degree graphic artists) in the Baltics during this period, see Mansbach, *Modern Art in Eastern Europe*.

³ See the chapter by Theodore Weeks in this volume.

⁴ The original proclamation of Lithuanian independence on 16 February 1918 was met almost immediately by an invasion of various warring parties, including Polish, Lithuanian, and Bolshevik. The territory of the new nation was one of the

these historical events is crucial to understanding the role of culture—and architecture, in particular—in creating a national self-image at a time when the very existence of the new republic was in peril.⁵

In 1921, through an arbitrated settlement brokered by the League of Nations, a Polish-dominated State of Central Lithuania

principal theaters of conflict during the Polish-Soviet War of 1919–20, which witnessed much of the country occupied and reoccupied by the Red Army, Polish regular and irregular forces, and various Lithuanian units (both Bolshevik and anti-Soviet). By 1920 Soviet Russian forces, which had been defeated in their attack on Warsaw, were sufficiently weakened to yield Vilnius and the surrounding territory to Lithuania. On 26 August 1920 advancing Polish troops encountered Lithuanian defense forces at a number of points, and a local war ensued. As a direct consequence, Lithuania stiffened its resolve to defend its newly regained capital as a Lithuanian cultural center and endeavored to reduce the considerable native Polish presence there, a presence that statistically—if controversially—represented the linguistic plurality. A ceasefire was negotiated between Lithuania and Poland on 7 November 1920, but on the following day General Lucjan Żeligowski, prompted by Polish Marshal Józef Piłsudski, led his First Lithuanian-Belorussian Division into Wilno (Vilnius/Vilna/Vilne) and captured the capital without a declaration of war. From that date Żeligowski embarked on a Polonization of the city and the surrounding territories, which were unilaterally declared the Republic of Central Lithuania. The League of Nations was able to persuade the parties to accept a plebiscite, and on that basis an armistice was concluded on 30 November 1920. Finally in March 1921, direct negotiations between Lithuania and Poland were conducted under the auspices of the League, which resulted in an arbitrated settlement through which a Polish-dominated State of Central Lithuania was reluctantly acknowledged by the League's member states. Not until 27 October 1939 did Lithuania recover Vilnius, and even then only because of Stalin's pressure on the Lithuanians to sign a mutual assistance pact through which Soviet troops and bases could be stationed on the country's territory.

⁵ There is not a large bibliography on Kaunas's architecture, or on modern architects active in Kaunas. The standard source remains Jankevičienė et al., *Kauno Architektūra*, whose greatest virtue is an extensive number of photographs of buildings with their ground plans. The text, more descriptive than analytical, does contain a one-and-a-quarter-page summary in English. For a most helpful introduction to the modern architecture of Lithuania (in both Lithuanian and English), see Baužienė, *Lietuvos Moderno Pastatai*, supported, in part, by the Swedish Institute, and encouraged by the Swedish Museum of Architecture. Although focusing principally on painting, sculpture, graphic art, and design, there is some discussion of Art Deco architecture in Jankevičiūtė, *Art Deco Lietuvoje*. For comparanda in Vilnius, see Lukšionytė-Tolvaišienė, *Istorizmas*.

(Środkowa Litwa) was established with Vilnius (Wilno) as its capital. Dispirited and materially handicapped by the loss of Vilnius, the diminished Lithuanian Republic was under tremendous pressure to assert its legitimacy internationally and to confirm its cultural viability domestically. To achieve this twofold task, so essential to Lithuania's very national survival,⁶ the government relied heavily on architecture to construct a public image, as well as to house the bureaucratic organs of the imperiled state. But to accomplish such a monumental task, the embattled republic could draw on only the most modest material resources. The treasury was without funds, and provincial Kaunas itself had few buildings suitable for accommodating the needs of a national government. The solution, dictated more by prevailing conditions than by freedom of choice, was to shape profoundly Lithuanian interwar architecture.

Whenever possible, existing buildings were adapted to current governmental needs, less to affirm ideologically the rather modest architectural heritage of provincial and culturally impoverished Kaunas than to house physically the necessary organs of a national state. Thus, with few local historical models deemed worthy of emulation, and in the absence of a compelling ideological imperative for referencing them, it is more important to note here the new buildings that were designed during the first dozen years or so of the short-lived Kaunas-based republic than to discuss the modest indigenous heritage that was mostly ignored. Paradoxically, this chapter opens with a discussion of a building that was not constructed or even seriously planned: a state parliament by

⁶ Because the League of Nations had only reluctantly agreed to the plebiscite and eventual negotiations between Poland and Lithuania, through which the latter's sovereignty but not its territorial integrity was acknowledged, the young republic was desperate to curry favor both with the leading League member states, primarily France and the United Kingdom, and also with the United States, which was not a member of the League of Nations. Numerous official delegations were sent from Kaunas to enlist political and commercial support from the Western democracies with which Lithuania hoped to secure its physical and fiscal survival. On 27 July 1922, the United States conferred on Lithuania political recognition; and with it associations of Lithuanian-Americans were enabled to raise funds to support the new nation.

which to signal to potential foreign supporters Lithuania's dedication to liberal republican principles.⁷

Whether because Kaunas was to be only a provisional capital or whether it was the result of a crisis of political will, the government elected to channel its scarce funds toward consolidating its cultural wealth rather than to investing in a representational state capitol. That is, instead of building a monumental parliament as had been widely realized in East-Central Europe,⁸ the embattled political state focused on Lithuania's cultural capital through commissioning a national art museum (and shortly thereafter an art school) through which modern Lithuanian culture could be shown, created, and honored. The need for a symbolic home for Lithuanian art in Kaunas was important as so much of the national heritage remained in Polish-occupied Vilnius. Thus, a museum that focused on a modern artist, rather than on a historical collection, might emphasize the republic's future rather than its lost past.

The strikingly radical and richly symbolist work of the painter-composer Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875–1911) perfectly suited the current requirement.

⁷ The negotiated settlement with Poland, brokered through the League of Nations, failed to win over popular opinion in the diminished territories of Lithuania. Indeed, for the twenty years following the treaty, a cold war was waged between Poles and Lithuanians: Lithuania refused to grant adequate legal protections to the Polish minority (of about 8%) within its constricted borders; and Poland continued its relentless cultural Polonization within its Central Lithuanian State and, especially, in multicultural Wilno. So intensive was the cultural cold war that the two countries accounted for a full third of the complaints filed with the League of Nations for violations of ethnic minority rights supposedly guaranteed under the League's charter. It is in this charged atmosphere that one needs to recognize the importance for Lithuania of securing the support of the League of Nations, as well as of France and other Western powers that exerted influence over Poland.

⁸ By comparison, one might cite the erection of the Hungarian Parliament House in Budapest (1885–1904) by Imre Steindl, with its 265-meter-long façade and towering central cupola, for over a century the largest parliament in the world, and one that surpassed in scale the rebuilt and expanded (in the eighteenth century) royal castle complex on the Buda side of the newly united city.



Figure 10.1. M.K. Čiurlionis, *Creation of the World, IV* from a cycle of 13 paintings, 1905/6; courtesy of The M.K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art.

The artist's reputation abroad as a pioneer of new forms of transcendent imagery, tending toward abstraction, made him attractive to Lithuanians, whose contingent of progressive artists was quite limited, especially as several of the most internationally recognized—Vytautas Kairiūkštis (1890–1961) being the most prominent—elected to remain

in cosmopolitan Vilnius. Moreover, Čiurlionis's accomplishments as a pianist and an innovative composer, perhaps more appreciated than his achievements in the visual arts, made him an ideal figure through which to celebrate the many-sided native talent and modern creativity. Born at the time of Lithuania's national awakening movement, Čiurlionis had grown up with a keen interest in reviving native historical, musical, and especially linguistic consciousness—concerns manifested visually in an art that drew on the musical rhythms of folk music and various landscape elements. Within three years of his death in 1911, his highly abstract visual vocabulary of musical tones, forms, and references was celebrated as a Lithuanian national treasure. Moreover, his tragic death due to mental illness just before the outbreak of World War I would prove timely for nationalist purposes. Safely and romantically removed from the contemporary life struggle of the new republic, Čiurlionis fulfilled the need for a modern national icon, one whose personal biography corresponded closely to the cultural conditions of the nation during the last decades of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth century. Consequently, nationalists campaigned actively to reclaim the artist's visual legacy—then in tsarist Russia, to which Lithuania was politically subject—and to bring it to Kaunas. And once a large body of Čiurlionis's work was secured for the state following World War I, Vladimiras Dubeneckis (1888–1932) began designs for a commemorative hillside museum and art school (see figure 10.2.).

It is important to note the contrast between the modernity of the art and the intentionally classicizing character of the architecture; for this visual variance encapsulates the general architectural program of Lithuania during the 1920s. To reassure a worried citizenry of the stability, as well as the legitimacy, of the state, official architecture often drew on classicism, especially when the activities housed by the building had a thoroughgoing modern currency. Thus, Dubeneckis's museum for the nation celebrated progressive native genius, while preserving and presenting it within a historical framework. The same bifocal vision is evidenced in the program for the National Bank, designed by Mykolas Songaila (1874–1941),⁹

⁹ See Baršauskas et al., "V. Dubeneckis ir M. Songaila," 101–34 (with a short bibliography of items published by and on the two architects, mostly during the

whose classicizing exterior shelters the spaces of modern financial statecraft. By the end of the 1920s, Lithuania's national survival was relatively secure; and the resulting confidence in the state and its institutions enabled the government and particularly its growing commercial classes to manifest faith in the future by embarking on a remarkable program of modern building.



Figure 10.2. Vladimiras Dubeneckis, Čiurlionis Gallery, 1924; courtesy of The M.K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art.

The Central Post Office building by Feliksas Vizbaras (1880–1970), whose employment of a tripartite façade would become a dominant feature of Kaunas's version of modernism, relies on locally available materials—granite for the portal and exterior stairs, and a profuse use of wood on the interior—for reasons of both national ideology and economy. Indeed, as political realities made trade with neighboring Poland and Soviet Russia difficult at best, and as the expense of importing building materials from farther

1930s or late 1950s). On the Bank of Lithuania, see the full-color brochure, *Lietuvos Banko, Kauno Skyrius* [Bank of Lithuania, Kaunas Department] (2002) issued privately by the bank.



Figure 10.3. Feliksas Vizbaras, Central Post Office, Kaunas, 1930–31;
photograph by J. Frane.

afield was prohibitive, the Republic in Kaunas relied on its own resources and freely acknowledged its limitations. Thus the capital development drew on native materials and employed the limited construction technology readily available regardless of building type or use. Hence, an impressive number of multistoried apartment buildings were built on speculation, in order to accommodate the significant number of bureaucrats, storeowners, and middle-class refugees who moved to the provisional capital in order to serve the state. Designed by many of the nation's most accomplished architects, such as Vytautas Landsbergis-Žemkalnis (1893–1993)¹⁰ and Vizbaras, the apartment buildings immediately established an architectural norm for multifamily structures in the city: a reliance on local materials and a preference for a tripartite façade. The architects' predilection for a restrained use of ornament, broad, smooth surfaces, and a rational organization of massing enabled them to conform outwardly to what they must have understood as the precedents of the "international style," examples of which from

¹⁰ See Kančienė et al., *Architektas Vytautas Landsbergis-Žemkalnis* (with English summary and full bibliography to 1991).

Berlin, Prague, Stuttgart, and elsewhere were readily available to them in professional journals imported from nearby Vilnius. Whatever superficial affinity these apartment houses bore to the modern exteriors designed by contemporaneous architects abroad, the kinship did not extend to the construction methods or materials, which conformed almost totally to the local tradition of stucco-covered bricks laid by hand, with wood and stone reserved for interior spaces.



Figure 10.4. Edmundas Frykas, City Fire House, Kaunas, 1929–30; photograph by J. Frane.

The curves to be seen on the twinned projections of the post office building were particularly favored in Kaunas, although they had little precedent locally. They were widely embraced in the Kaunas Republic mostly as a means of affirming the country's innovative variations on international modernism. Whether modestly present (as in the apartment house for Arnas Funkas or one designed by Bronius Elsbergas [1901–1998]) or more forthrightly asserted, as in the multistory buildings in the new sections of the provisional capital, the use of sweeping curves became a signifier of progressive aesthetics on all fronts—home, commercial, and governmental. This emphasis on a curving façade is most tellingly

expressed in the remarkable city firehouse of 1929/30 by Edmundas Frykas (1876–1944).

These Lithuanian variations on Moderne, functionalist, or rationalist architecture—to employ the terms that were invoked in the country's newspaper reviews, cultural journals, and architects' statements of the period—presented the viewer with the impression that Kaunas was a cosmopolitan capital, despite its small size and provisional charter. Indeed, the government and its supporters hoped that both Lithuanian citizens and foreign visitors would see a Kaunas that could be taken seriously as a sophisticated capital of a progressive republic, one whose triumph over earlier adversity—such as foreign invasion, economic privation, and the loss of cultural patrimony—deserved both international respect and local support. Yet behind these impressive contemporary façades, tradition still held sway. All too frequently, the stylistically progressive building fronts hid circulation programs and spatial organization that slavishly followed late nineteenth-century models, as with a number of apartments designed by Dubeneckis in the late 1920s and early 1930s. But historical and ideological bifurcation was rarely recognized by Lithuania's architects or their patrons as a drawback; rather, it was frequently embraced as a creative solution to present conditions—as a way to reconcile nativism and internationalism, the national past and the cosmopolitan present. Perhaps nowhere is this inventive combination more powerfully insistent than in the Republic's two most representational buildings: the Lithuanian Armed Forces Officers Club and the National Museum-cum-War-Museum complex.

Lithuania's army needed to be alert and prepared, given the country's recent history and present threats; hence the understandable desire of its officer corps for an urban club (*Romovės*) near the organs of state they were sworn to defend. Although it is not known whether the army explicitly requested that the Officers Club be designed in a modern style, it is known that by 1930 the army commissioned a building whose design should affirm the army's modernity and its loyalty to the noblest traditions of the nation. Within a few years a rationalist structure, adorned with sculptural ornamentation on its cornice, rose just off the principal pedestrian zone of the new quarter.



Figure 10.5. Vladimir Dubeneckis, Officers Club, Kaunas, 1930;
photograph by J. Frane.

The three statues crowning the tripartite façade hint at the nativist references that can be found on the interior. The sculptural group by Bronius Pundzius (1907–1959) depicts three medieval Lithuanian warriors from a period when the nation was at its military zenith as a European power.¹¹ Here, viewers might recognize in the crowning figures the asserted continuity with the army's—and the nation's—most significant historical figure, Grand Duke Vytautas the Great (1350–1430), and the corresponding era of Lithuania's glory. Visitors were thus provided with a symbolic reminder of the nation's glorious past, while being exhorted to envision its contemporary resonance.

The combination of exterior rationalism, in the broad planes of the façade, and national symbolism, intimated through the sculptural ornamentation, is explicitly presented inside. Proximate to one another are a large functionalist auditorium, projecting cannon-like from the *corps de logis*, and two private chambers, one housing the “Lithuania Room” and one containing references to Grand Duke Vytautas the Great. In suggestive juxtaposition, hence, are the Lithuanian army's twin orientations: toward the fully contemporary and functional, and toward the noble native past. Significant for our purposes here is the embrace of the traditional *völkische* furnishings, with their national references, within a fully modern framework. The carved and inlaid tables, chairs, and wall decoration of the two dark, private rooms contrast with the functionalist design and original furnishings for the large auditorium lying just beyond. Here in a capacious, light-flooded hall, Lithuania's officer corps would hold their ceremonies in a contemporary environment where at least the appearance of a rational and economic organization of fenestration, seating arrangement, and flexible stage superseded the nativist design and historical references that were reserved for the private official functions in the nearby historical rooms. In this ideologically bifurcated building, it is as if the nation's history is protected by and given contemporary currency within the context of a progressive architecture.

A similar paradigm is present in the history of the National Museum complex. As mentioned above, the original competition plan

¹¹ See Jankevičiūtė, “Between Modernity and Tradition,” 226–27.

and the resulting building was designed by Dubeneckis to house the “national” art of Čiurlionis. By the end of the 1920s both an ideological imperative for a larger representational building and the availability of material resources encouraged progressive designs for a multipurpose complex through which to present to the Lithuanian nation (and the contemporary world) a confident cultural self-image. Following a competition, a winning design was submitted by a team that included, among other leading local architects, Dubeneckis.¹² The realized program contained an art museum, built



Figure 10.6. Vladimiras Dubeneckis, Karolis Reisonas, and Kazimieras Kriščiukaitis, Vytautas Magnus Cultural complex, Kaunas, 1929–36; courtesy of The M.K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art.

around the state’s Čiurlionis collection; a war museum; and a series of architectural memorials—the entire complex to be dedicated to Vytautas the Great on the five hundredth anniversary of his death. It is worth noting the programmatic concept informing this most ambitious building constructed during the entire history of the Lithuanian Republic. First, the very size of the project at-

¹² See Karolis Reisonas, *Architektas* [Architect] (Kaunas: Galtonia, n.d.).

tested to the national significance Lithuania placed both on its culture—the art museum, and the sacrifice rendered to safeguard it—the War Museum and the monuments to commemorate native heroism. The architectural focus on the nation's modern culture—and its defense—required an inventive design program, one that unified disparate viewpoints. The large plane surfaces of the façades, which are bracketed by rectilinear arcades below and flat, stepped roofs above, attest to the architects' interest in the rationalist architecture of contemporary Italy and Germany, as well as Holland, examples of which were known primarily through reproductions in professional publications. The museum's internationally contemporary exterior, akin to the Lithuanian Armed Forces Officers Club, houses both historical references and modern treasures. Although physically separated in different wings, the modern painting collections and the treasury of historical weapons and mementoes from the nation's valorous eras are powerfully juxtaposed. In this imposing museum complex, the visitor can easily move—literally and metaphorically—within the building: between past and present, between heroic heritage and contemporary international aspiration. It is this bifocal perception of the indigenous and the international, of the historical and the contemporaneous, that inspired Kaunas's modern architects and ultimately enabled the Lithuanian Republic to project its national self-image.

The capital modernism created and asserted in Kaunas was only one solution articulated in the new Baltic republics. Like the others, it responded to local needs and specific conditions. The material and historical circumstances prevailing in Tallinn and Riga dictated different responses to contemporary challenges; though in each instance, modern architecture played a decisive role in configuring the respective nation's self-image and promoting its identity internationally.

Unlike Lithuania, Estonia could not build on a historical memory of national greatness. There was no Estonian counterpart to Vytautas the Great or to the triumphant era of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania or of the great Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1569–1795). Yet the absence in Estonia of a heroic history was not a liability for the young republic. Liberated from the gravitational pull

of the past, the citizens of the emergent state were free to exploit positively the nation's newness, though they mostly respected the Hanseatic history of their small capital.

As there were few native Estonian architects, most progressive buildings were designed by Finns, Germans, and Russians. The Finns were notably active in Estonia, in part because they and their patrons across the Baltic Sea recognized a meaningful ethnic and linguistic kinship between the two peoples. Moreover, both nations had been subject to the tsar. And when Estonia became a battleground among contending German imperial, Russian tsarist, Russian Bolshevik forces, and German Freikorps, various factions of Estonians were joined by Nordic troops (primarily Finns) to free the country from foreign armies and to secure the independence and sovereignty declared originally in 1918. Thus, it is not surprising that progressive Finnish architects were frequently commissioned to execute (or to compete for) buildings that carried national significance for the indigenous people.¹³

Unlike the Kaunas Republic, Estonia was in a position to celebrate its hard-won independence by creatively adapting the traditional seat of government into a modern monument. Toompea Castle, which had dominated Tallinn since the thirteenth century, and which had evolved over the centuries into a complex of Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque period buildings serving as the seat of foreign overlords for a good part of a millennium, was preserved for the new government's use. The striking historical façades of the government complex were not removed to reveal the native gray limestone that underlay them, despite the official

¹³ In this context, one might name two of the best-known architects, Armas Lindgren (his Vanemuine Theater in Tartu, 1906; and the Estonian Theater [with Wivi Lõnn], 1913, in Tallinn) and Eliel Saarinen (his competition entry for the Tallinn City Hall, 1913; the Mutual Loan Society building in Tallinn, 1912; and the general plan for "Greater Tallinn," 1913). Even in the mid-1920s, with such competitions as for bathing pavilions in the seaside resort of Pärnu for instance, fully half of the entrants were Finnish. With the changed political circumstances of the mid- and late 1930s, Alvar Aalto's Finnish background disqualified him from a number of commissions, despite his periodic presence in Estonia and his influence among the country's architects.

designation of the local material as “the national stone.”¹⁴ Within the interiors of the complex, however, historical markers were rejected as inappropriate. Instead of inhabiting the symbolic spaces of German or tsarist hegemony, the infant Baltic republic sought to create environments congruent with the new national self-image and sympathetic to the practice of democratic government. Accordingly, Herbert Johanson (1884–1964) and Eugen Habermann (1884–1944) were commissioned to design the Assembly Hall (1920–1922) and its notable interior (atop the foundation walls of a former convent building).

To house the National Assembly and other gathering spaces for the elected representatives of the new nation, Habermann and Johanson designed a façade that reconciled the twin aspirations of the infant republic: affirmation of the indigenous past and profession of membership in an international league of modern states. This was accomplished by an inventive blend of historical allusiveness (referencing local buildings, combined with a generous use of architectural ornament inspired by indigenous textile designs) and an attentive emulation of the most advanced western styles (evident in the flat, white surfaces and regular fenestration derived from the incipient Modern Movement, which the architects knew primarily from contemporary journals from Germany, Italy, France, and, especially, Scandinavia).¹⁵ The effective intermix of the implicatively traditional

¹⁴ As in Germany, limestone was embraced as a national symbol. To quote the German ideologue Julius Langbehn [*Rembrandt als Erzieher* {Rembrandt as Educator} (Leipzig, 1890)]—as cited in Hallas, “National Stone, Limestone,” 14—“Granite is a Nordic and Germanic stone” and should be opposed to the Greek embrace of marble culture.

¹⁵ The Estonian-language cultural, political, and professional periodicals, which the nation’s architects read and to which they contributed, included *AGU: Kirjanduse, Kunsti ja Kultuuri Ajakiri* [Dawn: Literature, Art, and Culture Journal] (Tallinn); *ILO: Kirjanduslik kuukiri* [Beauty: The Literary Monthly Magazine] (Tartu); *ILO: Es imene ja ainus estee tilise kultuuri magasin Eesti* [Beauty: The First and Only Journal of Aesthetic Culture in Estonia]; *ILU: Elu, Kunsti ja kultuuri Ajakiri* [Beauty: Journal of Art, Life, and Culture] (Tallinn); *Siuru* [Bluebird] (Tallinn); and *AEG: Poliitika, Kirjanduse, Jasekunsti, Ajakiri* [Time: Politics, Literature, and Art Magazine] (Tallinn?). Also important was the Estonian journal published in Finnish, *TAIE: Eesti Kunsti Aiakiri* [Art: Estonian Art Journal]. Subscriptions to foreign architectural and cultural journals were held by a

and the rigorously contemporary suggested on the exterior reached new heights in the design for the interior with its striking ultramarine walls. Historicizing decorative motifs were used freely on door and window frames; however, the brilliant yellow ceiling plane was opened up expressionistically to allow debate to ascend, metaphorically transcending the gravitational pull of the building's long history.

In the comparatively favorable circumstances—political, economic, and social—now ascendant in the young republic, the government and the commercial classes inaugurated an accelerated building campaign.¹⁶ For Estonians this meant seizing new opportunities for development as part of a national effort toward economic modernization and international acceptance. With this in mind, architects, critics, patrons, and politicians turned to forms of functionalism, which by the late 1920s was increasingly identified with progress, democracy, and, significantly, national identity. Indeed by the 1930s, functionalism, as flexibly defined by Estonia's critics as it was widely embraced by its architects,¹⁷ would itself become a national symbol. Yet within this triad of attributes, there was great latitude for progressive expression and considerable ar-

number of Estonia's (foreign-trained) architects as well as underwritten by the national Cultural Endowment (from at least 1931).

¹⁶ The bibliography on Estonian modern architecture is considerable, and much of it is available in English editions or in Estonian-language texts with English summaries. Among the most reliable, for their descriptions, analyses, and manifold illustrations, are Künnapu, *Estonian Architecture*, with a helpful bibliography; *Eesti Arhitektuur XX Sajandil* [Estonian Architecture of the Twentieth Century]; *Estonian Architectural Review* 24, 25, and 26 (1999); Kalm, *Eesti Funktsionalism* [Estonian Functionalism]; the essays by Leonhard Lapin ("Twentieth-Century Space"), 6–8, Ants Hein ("The Leap towards Europe, 1900–18"), 9–47, Sigrid Abiline ("Relying on Traditions, the 1920s"), 49–82, and Mart Kalm ("The 1930s: Functionalism and the Surmounting of It"), 83–128 among others, in *Eesti XX Sajandi Ruum* [Estonian Twentieth-Century Space], exh. cat. (Tallinn: Rotermann's Salt Storage, 2000); and Karin Hallas-Murula, *Funktsionalism Eestis/Functionalism in Estonia*, exh. cat. (Tallinn: Museum of Estonian Architecture, 2002). Historiographically, the most helpful publication, more for its photographic documentation than for the accompanying essay (by Hanno Kompus), remains *20 Aastat Ehitomist Eestis, 1918–1938* [Twenty Years in Estonian Architecture, 1918–1938] (Tallinn, 1939).

¹⁷ See Hallas-Murula, *Funktsionalism Eestis*, 49 and n. 1 for further bibliographical references.

chitectural variation. Moreover, many of the country's most innovative architects readily accepted commissions for traditional buildings, especially urban warehouses, which could be designed in styles interpreted by the public as keeping faith with Estonia's rural history.¹⁸ References to Estonia's "nativist" character constituted an important aspect of the national self-image and, therefore, played a role in modern architectural practice. As the indigenous people were, until the beginning of the twentieth century, primarily land dwellers and of peasant stock, rustic structures carried significant ideological weight in the formation of an Estonian identity. Thus, throughout the interwar era, one frequently finds the same designer embracing functionalist and, equally comfortably, historicizing styles, often within the same building type: post offices, schools, apartment buildings, or hospitals.¹⁹

The oscillation between traditionalism and modernism in Estonian architecture conformed to a model followed throughout Eastern Europe during the early twentieth century, by means of which the multiplicity of styles, purposes, and methods trumped the claims for uniformity, rationality, and universality forcefully advocated by modernists in general.²⁰ Fundamentally, Estonia's embrace of func-

¹⁸ The national government took seriously the needs of the countryside, and supported with public funds numerous construction enterprises, as well as building departments in agricultural associations. With government support Estonian farmhouses, barns, and threshing buildings were conserved or built, many creatively combining new construction methods with (romantically) traditional architectural features. This is to be understood in contradistinction to the often large country estates of the long-entrenched Baltic German aristocratic and commercial classes. See August Volberg's two-volume compilation of rural buildings (1927 and 1930), as discussed in Karin Hallas, ed., *August Volberg, 1896–1983*, exh. cat. (Tallinn: Eesti Arhitektuurimuseum, 1996).

¹⁹ Although this chapter focuses on functionalism as a defining dimension of Estonian national identity, it must be acknowledged that during much of the 1920s and again from the mid-1930s, functionalism contended with an abiding traditionalism. Often, however, the two strains blended, as for example in the Parliament House (Assembly Hall) interior decoration by Johanson and Habermann; or in the Estonian Legation to Finland (1933), where Konstantin Böhlau's (1899–1959) rigorously functionalist exterior housed "*haut bourgeois*" interiors and furnishings.

²⁰ A similar blend of modern design and local or nativist traditions is evident in Western Europe (and elsewhere), as well. Indeed, a number of scholars have recently pointed out instances of national (or regionalist) romanticist architec-

tionalism rejected the ideological precepts of the Bauhaus, De Stijl, and Russian Constructivism, while embracing the Modern Movement's architectural physiognomy. Hence, one might comprehend Estonian functionalism as one essential dimension of the republic's authentic engagement with both modernity and national identity. As can be illustrated, this endeavor often entailed flexibility and invention in the methods and materials employed to realize the larger objective of constructing a modern nation state.²¹ Thus, one can find in Habermann's flatiron Rauaniit factory (1926–32) a good example of the employment of white façades, animated by regularly placed tiers of geometrically varied windows that were inspired by contemporary international style buildings in Central Europe. And Robert Natus (1890–1950) found inspiration in Fritz Höger's Hamburg Chilehaus for his own brick corner building (1935–36) in Tallinn. Although these international references attest to the attraction that innovative architecture from the West held for some Estonian architects, the latter chose carefully what to embrace from their Germanic teachers or foreign colleagues,²² and what to adapt to domestic needs, circumstances, and freshly minted traditions.

ture—in Scandinavia, Germany, the United States, and France—in which an inventive mixing (if not always a convincing integration) of the progressive and the retrospective can be ascertained. What distinguishes the practice in Eastern Europe is most likely the degree to and frequency with which artists would oscillate between working in a modern idiom and embracing a revivalist vocabulary or set of historical references. Although often practiced simultaneously, modern and traditional styles were less frequently combined on the same canvas, stage set, or sculpture. However, in the modern architecture practiced during the 1920s and 1930s in Eastern Europe, inventive—and often symbolically or ideologically charged—combinations of rigorously contemporary and emphatically retrospective design are united in the same project, as this chapter suggests.

²¹ In this regard, one is reminded of similar aspirations from elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe, many likely known by Estonia's notably well-read artist intelligentsia. Of particular suggestiveness was Jan Kotěra's advocacy of a distinctively Czech modern style by means of designing "in response to *our own* climate, using *our own* construction methods, and *our own* materials." See Jan Kotěra, "O novém umění" [New Art], *Volné směry* [Free Directions] 4 (1899–1900): 189–95.

²² Most of Estonia's architects who were active during the first republic had trained abroad. As had been the case for Lithuania's aspiring architects, many Estonians studied at Riga's Polytechnic Institute; but a significant number pursued their education in Germany (in Hanover, Dresden, Karlsruhe, Constance, and espe-

Unlike the canonical modernist architecture of Germany and Western Europe or nearby Russia, Latvia, and even Lithuania, Estonian functionalism was almost entirely *asocial*; that is, it typically eschewed the social (one might say “socialist”) programs that lay at the heart of Hannes Meyer’s radicalized Bauhaus, J.J.P. Oud’s adaptation of De Stijl, or the various Soviet formations of constructivism. As a result, one finds almost no emphasis on low-cost housing for workers;²³ just the opposite of what one would have encountered in a visit, say, to contemporary Berlin, Rotterdam, Vienna, or Riga. Instead of focusing primarily on the needs of factory workers, Estonia’s modern architects endeavored to satisfy the private ambitions of the factory owners, who—unlike their newly wealthy peers elsewhere—evinced a remarkable interest in industrial design. For instance, Olev Siinmaa (1881–1948) designed in 1930 for the industrialist Mark van Jung a villa in the heart of Tallinn whose exterior geometrical forms are forcefully articulated. Not to be outdone, Oskar Kerson commissioned Edgar-Johan Kuusik (1888–1974) to provide the family with a perfectly composed suburban retreat (1935–36 and 1939–40); but it was Erich Jacoby (1885–1941) who provided the most dramatic domestic solution through which to affirm the industrial elite’s commitment to rational design and forms, especially in the wooded suburb of Tallinn-Nõmme.²⁴

cially Darmstadt) or in Russia (principally in St. Petersburg), where longstanding practices as well as financial incentives provided by Baltic German associations, Estonian artist societies, and Imperial Russian government agencies supported the training of young architects from Russia’s “Northwestern Provinces.” See also Hallas-Murula, *Funktsionalism Eestis*, 52.

²³ Although the idea of Germany’s *Siedlungen* held some appeal for Estonia’s progressive architects, I know of but a single completed example of model housing. The cooperative Uus Tare, the result of a Tallinn-sponsored competition of 1931 won collectively by August Volberg, Erich Jacoby, Elmar Lohk, Edgar Kuusik, and Franz de Vries, resulted in a series of mostly semidetached houses for middle-class dwellers (such as lawyers, bankers, professors, and writers), rather than for a unionized working class.

²⁴ It is significant to note that there were very few examples of Estonia’s industrialists acquiring modern painting or sculpture by the nation’s progressive artists. This pattern runs counter to that in much of Central Europe, where the emergent owners of industry and the newly successful commercial upper class often commissioned architects to design large villas congruent with accepted “taste,”

Several of the large villas in Tallinn's urban and suburban fabric were constructed of wood and then plastered to give the appearance of concrete. But many more, especially those designed for the middle classes, forthrightly forsook smooth white surfaces with their simulated cement for an authentic emphasis on native materials. Although using unadorned wood was rare, Herbert Johanson made creative use of the inexpensive local timber in a city home (1931) whose functionalist character is straightforwardly revealed in its cubic design and window treatment as well as in its economy of construction, relying as it does on stacked stone foundations supporting wood slats. At roughly the same time (ca. 1933), Eugen Sacharias (1906–2002) designed a home (on Tallinn-Nõmme's Pärnu Road 169) whose wooden structure is clad in locally made brick. But by far the most dramatic assertion of Estonia's singular modernist architecture is in the widespread use of limestone, most always quarried on site,²⁵ dressed by hand, and laid in courses by teams of masons. The functionalist buildings constructed for the newly established industrial leaders were essentially representational. That is, it was their exteriors that were designed to impress the public with the progressive vision of their owners. In almost every instance (the exception proving the rule being those houses designed for the architects themselves) the interiors of these villas were furnished with traditional trappings (and frequently the clutter) of the *haute bourgeoisie*, whose conventional taste in interior design was emulated by the Estonians.

It is important to recognize that the embrace of limestone seemingly transcended building types, and was not limited to functional-

before filling the drawing rooms and dining rooms with modern paintings. One might contrast, for example, the grand Budapest bourgeois home of Georg Lukács's banker father, with its numerous canvases by Hungary's most progressive painters, with the interiors of the modern villas designed in Estonia by Kuusik, many of which originally displayed academic art or reproductions of European masterworks.

²⁵ Toward the end of the 1930s, during the authoritarian rule of Konstantin Päts, inmates of the Murru Prison were sent to quarry stone to produce building slabs, planed stairs, and socle plates that were used to help fulfill the large construction program sponsored by the state. See figures from "Valitsusasutiste tegevus" (1937/38) cited in Hallas-Murula, *Funktsionalism Eestis*, 83.

ist, sacred, or domestic structures. As the declared “national building material” of the young republic, it was employed for Tallinn’s schools, fire stations and civic buildings, warehouses, commercial establishments, and entertainment facilities. The widespread use of local stone surely carried symbolic importance for the construction of a modern Estonia; but one should not lose sight of its more material advantages, which were also congruent with the nation’s modernist aspirations and economic limitations. The use of dressed stone allowed the builder to avoid costly plaster work. Further, because much of the stone was quarried on site, frequently hewn from the foundation trenches themselves, transportation expenses were reduced. Moreover, building with (frequently) undressed limestone blocks was often carried out in winter (unlike brick laying), thereby enabling day laborers and skilled stonemasons to be employed year-round. Such handwork might well entail high labor expenditure in other countries; but in Estonia, with a mostly nonunionized workforce, the use of manual labor for construction proved quite affordable while helping to ensure high employment.

Thus for economic, symbolic, and political reasons, Estonian functionalism mostly eschewed technical innovation and advanced construction methods. This meant in practice that the innovative processes, materials, and techniques promoted by many Western modernists did not find a sympathetic reception among Estonia’s thoroughly modern architects, its progressive industrialists, civic authorities, or middle class patrons. Instead, local building traditions, indigenous materials, and time-honored procedures were utilized in the construction of a modern republic.

To a great extent, Estonia’s modernist impulse was the result of a nationalist imperative in which economic conditions, social patterns, and geological and climatic realities played contributive roles. Moreover, the government involved itself more actively in promoting construction projects—principally representational buildings and modestly sized apartment houses for the middle classes—as an essential aspect of a concerted social action program through which to secure its popular support. This became more emphatic once Konstantin Päts’s authoritarian regime consolidated its position from roughly 1934.

The Päts government exploited progressive architecture to demonstrate the government’s claims to modernism with a purpose not

unlike that of Italian Rationalism under Mussolini or German industrial architecture under Hitler.²⁶ Thus one finds a significant number of essentially functionalist commissions awarded through government-sponsored competitions (even if not always funded from the public coffers). Many of these winning designs were entered by modernist architects who had been active during the preceding decade, and who continued working in a generally constructivist vein. The distinction between their pre- and post-1934 designs is less a matter of general style than one of emphasis, which can best be detected in the sources of reference or orientation, often manifested through the choice and blending of materials, as well as an employment of a decorative program on the principal façade. As the authoritarian government itself increasingly sought accommodation with powerful European dictatorships rather than looking to the Scandinavian democracies on whose support the nation had earlier relied, so too did the republic's architects gaze admiringly at the modernist architecture of Germany and, especially, the rationalist architecture of Italy.²⁷ In a number of projects directly on or not too distant from Tallinn's central Vabaduse (Freedom) Square, Herbert Johanson, Elmar Lohk (1901–

²⁶ For an incisive analysis of rationalist architecture under Mussolini, see Etlin, *Modernism in Italian Architecture*. Among the voluminous literature on Germany's modern architecture during National Socialism, the following two anthologies present a good range of views: James-Chakraborty, *Bauhaus Culture*; and Etlin, *Art, Culture, and Media*.

²⁷ Although several of Estonia's leading architects of the interwar years had pursued their professional studies in Germany, the pervasive residual antipathy toward Baltic Germans in the post-1918 republic had discouraged relations between the countries. Moreover, continued skepticism of Soviet Russia's intentions toward the small Baltic republic hampered cultural relations between the communist and the liberal democratic states. With official discouragement of contacts between Estonia and the two great cultures of modernist experimentation, both of which had traditionally dominated Estonia's native population, artists and architects were inspired to pursue contacts with Nordic nations, especially as the Swedes, Finns, and Danes had helped to secure Estonia's sovereignty around 1918. The change in Estonia's political orientation in the mid-1930s gave license to the country's cultural elite to reconnect to Germany. However, in view of the persistent Estonian suspicion of Germany's cultural and economic intentions, authoritarian Italy provided an attractive alternative. Moreover, Italian Fascism's perceived endorsement of modernist building was accepted in Tallinn as a possible model to be emulated locally.

1963), Anton Soans, and Edgar-Johan Kuusik erected schools, commercial buildings, and a central Art Hall (Kunstihoone) (1933–34) that drew on design elements from Italy’s reactionary modernism. But appended to the rationalist framework of these buildings were distinctly local elements: granite revetment on ground floors, dolomite decorative motifs on cornices, or limestone niche sculpture by native artists, for example.²⁸ In blending the cosmopolitan (style) with the indigenous (materials, methods, and ornamentation), Estonia’s advanced architecture of the Päts “era of silence,” at least initially,²⁹ proclaimed the nation’s reconciliation of the progressive and the retrospective, the transnational and the native.³⁰ And in this creative blend of apparent opposites, Tallinn’s architectural modernism constitutes a

²⁸ In 1937 statues of “Work” and “Beauty” by Juhan Raudsepp (1896–1984), one of Estonia’s most accomplished sculptors, were placed in the two niches flanking the Art Hall’s central four-story window block. It is likely that the inclusion of Raudsepp’s figurative images was an attempt by the (Estonian) Artists’ Club and the Cultural Foundation, which originally commissioned the building, to demonstrate congruence with the authoritarian government’s post-1934 conservatism. See Kalm, *Eesti Funktsionalism*, 62. For a contemporaneous, somewhat ambivalent critical assessment of the building, see Hallas-Murula, *Funktsionalism Eestis*, 71, n. 3, who quotes from a review of 5 October 1934: “The art building itself is a stone house, but the façade has more glass than wall, like a greenhouse or a huge photo shop. . . . Whole walls facing the square are mostly windows. It can hardly be very comfortable there in summer time. But what’s the point of complaining—modern architecture does not always consider comfort, there must be a touch of style as well.”

²⁹ Päts signaled the era’s ambivalence about modern architecture, especially its putative “internationalist” aspect. At the inauguration of the modestly modernist Bank of Estonia building, he cautioned that in “erecting future state buildings there should be no running after everything that is modern,” in order to follow foreign models. (See “Riigivanema manitsused pangategelastele,” in *Vaba Maa* [The Free Land] [15 April 1935], as quoted in Hallas-Murula, *Funktsionalism Eestis*, 73.) Henceforth, branches of the national bank in Tartu, Pärnu, and elsewhere were designed in a more traditional Estonian architectural vocabulary employing gabled roofs and ornamental motifs.

³⁰ Although there is little evidence to suggest significant or sustained contact between the architects of Estonia and Lithuania during the 1930s, parallel stylistic characteristics and comparable ideological commitments among Baltic modern painters and sculptors were visible to audiences who attended the large exhibitions of Lithuanian art mounted in Estonia (as well as in Scandinavia, Czechoslovakia, and France) in 1937. See Jankevičiūtė, *Dailė ir Valstybė*, 286–87.

creative counterpoint to the inventive strategies employed in Lithuania for its own capital modernism.

Occupying an intermediary position geographically, culturally, and architecturally was the capital modernism created in Riga, the only true metropolis in the Baltic region. Here in Latvia's principal city, the forces of history and modernism reached an accommodation unique for northeastern Europe, and notably distinguishable from the solutions pursued in neighboring Estonia and the Kaunas Republic. Tallinn's modernists were able to insert their progressive style into the periphery of the Hanseatic Old Town and, especially, into the villa suburb of Nõmme (and in the Baltic Sea resort of Pärnu). Kaunas's cohort of advanced architects and planners was able freely to create singular versions for modernist building types—especially evident in multiapartment residences and museums, for instance—due to the establishment of the provisional capital in a small town. By contrast, Riga had regionally unique histories, contemporary demands, and national expectations to acknowledge, embrace, and resolve architecturally—all within a vital, long-established, large urban setting.³¹

Riga's centuries as a principal Hansa trading center and its continuing role through the nineteenth century as a major Russian imperial entrepôt allowed for the growth of a powerful and wealthy middle class made up of successful merchants and practitioners of the liberal professions. Moreover, its distinctive history as a major port coupled with the settlement patterns of a Baltic German dominant class, Latvian workers from the countryside, Russian sailors and their support personnel, as well as a significant presence of foreign traders and Jews added to the cosmopolitan complexion of the city.³² To fulfill the needs of the burgeoning metropolis, the city counselors

³¹ The principal scholar of Latvia's modern architecture is Jānis Krastiņš, whose numerous publications have focused mostly on the period in Riga from Jugendstil through the 1930s. Among the most significant of his books—and the most accessible linguistically—are Krastiņš, *Rīgas jūgendstila ēkas*; Krastiņš et al., *Rīga*; Krastiņš, *DoCoMoMo, Latvian Working Party*; and Krastiņš, *Latvijas Republikas*. See also the invaluable comparative study by Fülberth, *Tallinn—Rīga—Kaunas*, with its emphasis on planning issues.

³² For a careful study of Riga's history in its rich sociological and political contexts, see Hirschhausen, *Die Grenzen der Gemeinsamkeit*.

opened up major tracts for residential development during the first decade of the twentieth century. The result of this mostly speculative development, many of whose most impressive buildings were designed for the commercial and professional elite by Mikhail Osipovich Eisenstein (1867–1921),³³ was the most extensive Jugendstil quarter anywhere. And even if the interior arrangement of rooms conformed to late nineteenth-century conventions, the exterior decorative programs were consummately inventive and original. Moreover, the district represented a modern counterfoil to the historic Old Town, with its gothic churches and warehouses.

The economic and social optimism that Jugendstil represented, especially for many Jews living in the stylish apartment buildings, came to an abrupt end with the start of World War I. The outbreak of conflict affected the intelligentsia, strong supporters of architectural modernism, in often contradictory ways. Whereas many had risen against the tsarist authorities (and their German-Baltic supporters) in 1905 and continued their opposition in the years immediately following, Latvians proved—however reluctantly—loyal to the tsar when the war began in 1914. For the nationalistic Latvians, both principal antagonists were seen essentially as foes: the Germans were aggressors who were likely to reinforce the domination of the German-Baltic elite in Latvian political, economic, and cultural life; the Russians were staunch opponents of Latvian freedom and statehood. Nonetheless, in 1915 eight regiments of Latvian riflemen (*strēlnieki*) were created and soon distinguished themselves as the premier units in the tsar's army, notwithstanding the continued promotion of their own nationalist objectives. Drawn from Latvia's student population and from the countryside, the riflemen's allegiance to the tsar was not absolute; most, in fact, were dedicated socialists and in 1917 provided the decisive military force in the Russian Bolsheviks' seizure of power.

The support given by Latvia's intelligentsia (and most of its peasantry) to revolutionary movements stemmed less from socialist

³³ Eisenstein embodied Riga's multiethnicity. His paternal grandparents were German Jews; his maternal grandparents were Swedish; and he himself was Russian Orthodox trained professionally in St. Petersburg before advancing his career in the Latvian metropolis.

principle than from hope for independence that might ensue upon the overthrow of the tsar. Thus, when the Romanov rule was toppled, they declared only limited allegiance to Alexander Kerensky's liberal Russian government, which sought to maintain the empire's existing borders. Latvia's socialists allied themselves instead with Lenin's Bolsheviks, who had promised independence to the empire's nationalities. In Latvia, the end of 1917 witnessed not just the downfall of the tsar but also the occupation of Riga by the German army, which allowed the local government to assert the country's independence as a democratic, anti-Bolshevik state. Germany, however, was forced to surrender to the victorious Allies; and in January 1919 the United Workers, Soldiers, and Landless Peasants Council proclaimed Latvia a Soviet republic.

Latvia's Soviet regime soon resorted to a brutal Red Terror to secure its authority. These tactics, which alienated most of the communist supporters among the Latvian population, rallied even members of the Latvian riflemen to defend the liberal opponents. The ensuing civil strife was exacerbated when the Western Allies agreed to permit the German Freikorps to enter Latvia to suppress the Bolshevik regime and restore liberal democracy. The German "volunteers" proved more interested in renewing the dominance of their German-Baltic brethren than in reinstating a Latvian government, no matter how anti-Bolshevik. Thus, new battle lines were drawn between the German Freikorps and the Latvian nationalists, and between the Germans and the Soviets. Following years of internal warfare, complicated by the entrance of Estonian troops and regiments from friendly Scandinavian countries, an exhausted land was able to secure peace on 20 August 1920.

The fighting had taken a heavy toll on Latvia: massive material destruction for all and tremendous havoc for the intelligentsia,³⁴ which had been demoralized by shifting allegiances, its population reduced both by emigration and by casualties in conflict. One of the

³⁴ According to the statistics published in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (London and New York, 1922–), 729, Riga's prewar (January 1913) population of 517,522 declined to 210,590 by August 1917. Moreover, the number of workers and employees in private industries fell from a 1914 high of 62,000 to only 9,729 in 1920. In the rural districts, according to the census of 1920, of 609,475 buildings, 84,163 were completely destroyed and 117,015 partly destroyed.

first and most compelling needs was to provide housing, especially in Riga, where many had fled from the devastated countryside to join the thousands of returning war veterans to the newly declared national capital. Moreover, the new buildings would also have to assert an ideological function—namely to demonstrate the democratic principles of a modern republic, yet one that would also forthrightly acknowledge the long, noble history of Riga. The solution was an inventive form of eclecticism, an architectural parallel to the creative blend of figuration and abstraction pursued by the nation's leading avant-garde painters, sculptors, and designers of the era: Niklāvs Strunke, Romans Suta, Teodors Zaļkalns, Marta Liepiņa-Skulme, and Eriks Kālis, among many others.

The vigorous modernism of Estonia, which had little need to draw on history, was not appropriate to the expectations of post-World War I Riga. Nor was the inventive Lithuanian solution of revetting historical traditions in a modernist style. Instead, Riga's progressive architects, their patrons, and the city fathers promoted a characteristic melding of varying aspects of modernist idioms, drawn from both Western models and East-Central European practices. Apartment buildings by Pāvils Dreijmanis (1895–1953), Teodors Hermanovskis (1883–1964), and Pauls Mandelštams (1872–1941) evince modernist ribbon windows, broad balconies, and horizontal strapping, often constructed with steel supports, while frequently employing decorative motives borrowed from the local Jugendstil, from Vienna Secessionism, or from a characteristic Latvian blend of French Art Deco and German functionalism.³⁵

By 1930 the nation's independence was secure, social policies to rebuild the nation were well-advanced, and comparative economic progress was established. Under these positive circumstances, the eclectic modernist style was then extended to most new buildings in the capital. The Latvian Stock Bank building, erected in 1931, affirmed the ideological reliability of functionalism with its reinforced concrete frame, broad glazing, and horizontal banding. Municipal club houses, elementary schools, orthopedic clinics and

³⁵ The interpretation of Riga's modernist architecture as a singular form of neo-eclecticism was first and most creatively asserted by Jānis Krastiņš, especially in the bibliographical references cited in note 31.

medical colleges, office buildings, cinemas, restaurants, and especially financial institutions soon followed, thereby consolidating in Riga an eclectic modernism of use, typology, and style. Architects such as Alfrēds Grīnbergs (1893–?), Alfrēds Kars (1886–1949), Kurts Betge (1888–?), and Dāvids Zariņš (1892–1980), among an impressive cohort of like-minded and talented progressive figures, designed for Riga an array of buildings that collectively, if variously, added another chapter in the unfolding of unique forms of modernism in northeastern Europe.

Riga's architectural eclecticism may have continued developing in new directions had not the economic and political fundamentals shifted dramatically. As was the case in neighboring Estonia and Lithuania, the manifold effects of a worldwide recession made comprehensive building programs in Latvia increasingly impractical starting in the mid-1930s. Moreover, the political and cultural landscape drifted increasingly away from republicanism and liberality of expression toward authoritarianism and rationalization of the arts. In Latvia, and this was true for all the Baltic states, the rise of extremist intolerance, a general hostility toward cultural experimentation, and a significantly lowered level of expectation proved discouraging of the progressive styles and programs that had given rise to a remarkable modernist architecture in Riga, just as these features had vitiated the constructions of capital modernisms in Kaunas and Tallinn.

For Kaunas, in particular, the Baltic states' modernism remained tentative, both because its status as state capital was always intended to be temporary and its financial resources were seriously circumscribed. Much of Lithuania remained subject to the post-World War I Polish state, including its cultural, economic, historic, and educational metropolis, Vilnius. Moreover, the modest population of the provisional capital had difficulty in supporting ambitious modernist building programs and therefore limited itself mostly to representational structures and a few apartment houses. Several foreign nations which maintained diplomatic relations with the much-diminished Lithuanian Republic, most notably the Vatican and the United States, did elect to erect modestly modernist embassies and thereby lent architecturally symbolic support to the new nation's claim to be taken seriously as a progressive cultural and

political republic. But unlike either of the developed port cities and major entrepôts of Tallinn and Riga, Kaunas lacked the physical size, native population, commercial contacts, material resources, and political charter to develop into a significant Baltic capital of modernism. Nonetheless, within these limitations, and for the brief two decades of its political prominence, Lithuanian Kaunas served as a seedbed for modernist experimentation. In this regard, Kaunas's Officers Club and the M.K. Čiurlionis National Museums of Art and War (and memorial) complex, in particular, presented a novel form of modern architecture appropriate for a new and insecure state. Moreover, Kaunas's singular capital architecture complemented those inventive modernist monuments being constructed in neighboring nations. Consequently, Kaunas must be recognized as contributing ingeniously to the variegated modernist expressions constructed along the Baltic's eastern littoral.

11. Imperial and National Helsinki: Shaping an Eastern or Western Capital City?

Laura Kolbe

Helsinki, mixing many aspects of its Swedish, Russian, and national history, has its own specific character, linked to its geopolitical location on the shore of the Baltic Sea. Helsinki's development during the nineteenth century was similar to that of many other medium-size capitals in Continental, Eastern, and Northern Europe, and thus comparable with cities in the Habsburg, Ottoman, and Prussian empires.¹ At the time, Helsinki was the capital city of the Grand Duchy of Finland and part of the Russian Empire. It can thus be compared with many similar cities in Eastern European empires. An administrative tradition of civil servant rule, an industrial structure still oriented toward agriculture, a lack of capital, and slow industrial and infrastructure development caused the urbanization process to begin late in Helsinki. The driving force behind modernization was not a weak civil society, but professional groups and civil servants who had received their education in the nineteenth century. The situation changed when in the 1870s the city started to grow and municipal governance, urban functions, and structures became more comprehensive.

A conceptual analysis of urban history and culture, symbols, and visual townscape help elucidate how different images are politically created.² The City Hall of Helsinki, the main symbol of this capital city of independent Finland (1917), was formerly a Russian-Finnish

¹ Blau et al., *Shaping the Great City*; Gunzburger Makaš et al., *Capital Cities*.

² This theme is discussed in more depth in Sonne, *Representing the State*.

city hotel: Societetshuset. It was transformed into its modern function in 1931.³ This Russian building is a symbol of Russian history in Finland, linking Helsinki to the Eastern power politics in the Baltic Sea region. Just ten minutes by boat off the city shore, one can reach the monumental military fortress of Sveaborg, the main symbol of Swedish eighteenth-century power politics. It was built to fortify defenses in the eastern part of the Swedish Empire.⁴ Moreover, the King's Gate and the Great Courtyard show the Swedish presence in Helsinki's history. The main questions raised in this chapter are how the three historical identities (Swedish, Imperial Russian, and national) are represented in the capital city and how Helsinki developed after World War I, as the city became the capital of an independent state.

The Royal and Imperial Legacy

Finland's Eastern position was connected to St. Petersburg, at the time the capital of Russia and an expansive center of power on the Baltic Sea rim. From 1812, Helsinki functioned as the administrative center for the newly established Russian Grand Duchy of Finland, after being separated from Sweden in 1809 in the wake of the great wars in Europe and subsequently annexed by the Russian Empire.⁵ Before that, from mid-thirteenth century, Finland was a part of Sweden and Stockholm was the capital for Finns. From the Swedish period comes the Western system of public control and centrality, which was based on a dominating capital city with surrounding small towns and villages on both sides of the Gulf of Bothnia.⁶ One of these towns was Helsinki (originally known in Swedish as Helsingfors), established in 1550 by the Swedish king Gustavus Vasa. The basic task of this Swedish town located on the northern shore of the Gulf of Finland was

³ The Societetshuset was officially inaugurated as Helsinki City Hall in 1913. See Kolbe et al., *Helsinki City Hall*, 44–59.

⁴ Klinge et al., *Helsinki*, 16–22.

⁵ Åström, *Samhällsplanering*, 42–58.

⁶ Hall, "The Changing Role of Capital Cities," 69–70.

to compete with the powerful Hanseatic City Tallinn on the opposite side of the Gulf.⁷

Despite its long Western history, Helsinki is a city with a rather short urban continuity. When walking in the city center, one notices the lack of an essential European urban landmark. There is no historic urban core, no old town or remains of a fortress, no medieval city center or *die Altstadt* according to the pattern familiar from older European cities. Today, the urban self-portrait of Helsinki combines three historical layers. Helsinki experienced its first drastic metamorphosis in 1812, which involved attaining the physical attributes of a capital city as well as symbolizing Russian-Finnish state identity. As a result, this typical Swedish town was transformed into a typical Russian provincial capital. From 1870 to 1939, Helsinki went through a second drastic change, attaining various physical attributes of national identity and Western European modernism. The primary agents of urban and architectural change were now Finns, acting within the framework of local governance. Helsinki became a space where the national sentiments of the capital city bourgeois elites could be expressed.⁸ In the city center, one can see how classical, imperial architecture is combined with national architecture and the modernist planning of the twentieth century.

The shift from a Swedish town to a Russian city can be seen in the words inaugurating the new capital, which were pronounced by Emperor Alexander I. In one of his letters, Johan Albert Ehrenström, the main city planner, later analyzed the role of the emperor in this process: “L’Empereur a goûté et approuvé le Plan. Dans son exécution il seroit un des monuments glorieux de son règne.”⁹ [The Emperor has enjoyed and accepted the Plan. When realized it will be a glorious monument over his period.] Ehren-

⁷ This maritime heritage is preserved in Helsinki’s symbols. The coat of arms (1640) shows a boat and waves, indicating its settlement history. Otherwise only a few fragments, dating back to archaeological investigations during the 1930s, have been placed in the area where the old town used to be.

⁸ For further discussion, see Klinge et al., *Helsinki*.

⁹ Åström, *Samhällsplanering*, 42–58; Blomstedt, *Johan Albrecht Ehrenström*, 258–64; Klinge et al., *Helsinki*, 24–32. Also Lilius, *Esplanade*, 9–11; Hall, *Planung europäischer Hauptstädte*, 69–75.

ström, a Swedish-born engineer and officer, was invited to head the Reconstruction Committee, established and financed by the Russian Emperor in 1812. This committee was Helsinki's first town planning authority.¹⁰

The transition from being a royal Swedish to becoming an imperial Russian city implied an ascent in the urban hierarchy. This marked a clear change of policy. In imperial Helsinki, the modest urban and Swedish past was destroyed or rebuilt in the new city center, or marginalized at the periphery. The most visible Swedish monument was the sea fortress Sveaborg off the shore of Helsinki. This fortress was occupied by Russians in 1808. After the occupation its role was to guard the shipping channels to St. Petersburg.¹¹ After the 1812 proclamation, new construction projects were initiated by Russian emperors and realized by the Reconstruction Committee. A number of key buildings were erected with the aim of defining the role of the capital city for this newly recognized European state. Urban planning became an expression of Russian imperial and eastern power. The city's identity as a provincial government center was backed by an architecturally and ideologically suitable imperial style. This high style, with its long historical roots, was employed at that time in St. Petersburg to mark the European imperial spirit. Monumental Russian classicism expressed the essence of political conservatism, continuity, order, and stability. The new town plan (1817) and a regular, functionally and architecturally proportioned urban structure displayed this classical spirit, well acknowledged from European princely towns. Construction began in 1816, when the Reconstruction Committee hired Berlin-born C.L. Engel, an architect who had earlier worked in Tallinn and St. Petersburg.

The first prominent Russian architectural icons were located around Senate Square and at Katajanokka and Turku garrisons. Differences appeared in the city center, which had been chosen for the upper strata of society. Suburbs employed wood rather than

¹⁰ Klinge et al., *Helsinki*, 7–15; Blomstedt, *Johan Albrecht Ehrenström*; Stenius, *Helsingfors stadsplanehistoriska atlas*, maps 70–82.

¹¹ There is an excellent presentation of Suomenlinna landmarks at www.suomenlinna.fi/en (accessed 6 April 2014).

stone as a building material. Engel's main work was the imperial Senate Square, surrounded by the Government Palace (1822), the main building of the Imperial Alexander University (1832), and the Lutheran Cathedral, which was finished in 1852. The Cathedral dominates Senate Square with its classical monumentality.¹² This closed architectonic frame is a Finnish thicket of memories and a metaphor for state, nation, and European city planning, combining both western and eastern elements. Military churches and chapels, as well as the governor general's residence and Kruununhaka gendarme manège or riding academy also served as visual symbols of Russian authority.¹³

The old Swedish Market Square was ornamented with the first Russian public monument in 1835. The empress's stone, an obelisk topped with the Russian state symbol, the double eagle, was designed by Engel and unveiled in 1835 in memory of the visit by Emperor Nicholas I and his wife Alexandra to Helsinki two years earlier. Some changes were made to transform Swedish buildings into imperial ones. The Imperial Palace, for example, was originally a salt storehouse. J.H. Heidenstrauch, one of the town's elite merchants, purchased the entire lot and erected a stately residence there. In 1837 the construction committee purchased the house for the price of 170,000 rubles for official use as the Imperial Palace.¹⁴

¹² For a complete introduction to Engel's work in Finland see Henrik Lilius, ed., *Carl Ludwig Engel: Eine Ausstellung* (Helsinki: Helsingin Juhlaviikot, 1990).

¹³ Klinge et al., *Helsinki*, 24–28; Eskola et al., *Pearl of Helsinki*. The Senate was replaced by the Council of State in 1918. Today the building houses the offices of the Prime Minister of Finland and the cabinet.

¹⁴ A detailed presentation of the building history in English is available at www.tpk.fi (accessed 6 April 2014). It was visited for the first time by a member of the imperial family as late as 1851. The visitor was the young successor to the throne Alexander Nikolayevich (later Tsar Alexander II). During Alexander II's reign, the palace experienced its most brilliant time. The tsar visited the city three times (in 1856, 1863, and 1876), staying at the palace on each occasion. In 1863 the Finnish Diet was to be opened by the emperor in the Great Ballroom. The ballroom was accordingly converted into a throne room, with the imperial throne in the background.

Building a Russian or a National Identity?

The driving force behind nineteenth-century Finnish urban modernization was not civic society, but rather cadres and civil servants who had been educated in national institutions, such as the university and the Polytechnical Institute. The right to make urban plans was monopolized by the authorities much in the fashion of centrally governed countries. The Senate, the highest state authority, also took many concrete initiatives, such as encouraging Helsinki to build a water mains network (in 1862), and promoted the construction of stone buildings (instead of wooden ones) by granting state loans. However, planning proposals still had to be confirmed by the emperor. Distinction, hierarchy, and fire safety continued to be apparent features in the urban plan and construction rules for Helsinki that were confirmed in 1875.¹⁵

Socially, a considerable number of Russians lived in Helsinki with their distinctive culture. Balts, Poles, Tatars, and Jews traveled with the Russian army and came to Helsinki, as well as Romany and Germans. Churches, cultural institutions, and schools became major Russian elements in the town space. Street and shop signs were in three languages: Swedish, Finnish, and Russian. The Alexander Nevsky Garrison Church in Sveaborg was completed in 1854. The building had five steeples with onion domes according to the Greek Orthodox style. The other Greek Orthodox churches, the Church of Holy Trinity (1827) and Uspensky Cathedral (1868), added Eastern dignity to the new administrative center of Helsinki. In 1913 the Chapel of Peace was built in front of Uspensky Cathedral to mark the one-hundredth anniversary of Treaty of Hamina. The Imperial Alexander Theater (1879) on Bulevardi Street housed the city's Russian theater and opera. The new school building of the Alexander Gymnasium (1913) on Arkadiankatu was planned by Russian architects. The Russian army supplies depots were located in the harbor area, and Kaivopuisto Park, spa, and restaurant were frequently visited by Russian tourists.¹⁶

¹⁵ Åström, *Samhällsplanering*, 129–141; Hall, *Planung europäischer Hauptstädte*, 72–75.

¹⁶ Lampinen, *The Russian Style*, 60–68.

National political development was encouraged by Emperor Alexander II during the 1860s and the Diet of Finland held its first meeting in Helsinki in 1863. A new national political precinct was developed close to Senate Square with central institutions like the Bank of Finland (1865), the House of Nobles (1867), and the State Archives (1888). All these buildings were designed to demonstrate the national political emancipation according to Western political ideals. The style and topology of these buildings followed the widespread doctrines of late nineteenth-century Western historicism, relying on a range of styles from the past and presenting a mixture of European architectural languages. The House of the Estates (1891) became a symbol for both imperial and national aspirations, based on a skillful use of European typology. It was a venue for meetings for the three common estates during the assemblies of the representatives of the estates. Greek temple façades complete with columns adorn the front of the building. The tympanum by sculptor Emil Wikström from 1903 depicts a group of symbolic bronze figures, with the central figure of Russian emperor Alexander I confirming the laws and national rights of Finland. An entrance hall richly decorated with iconographic paintings leads to a grandiose staircase and to the estates assembly halls.¹⁷

A mixture of state centralism and municipal planning can be seen in the planning and building of the railway, which started in the 1860s and showed how important the state's goals and investments were to the whole nation. In Helsinki the railway and its main station significantly influenced the city's development. The railway area lay on the northern rim of the city center and the western major road (*Västra chausséen*) was drawn through this area.

As cities started to grow and urban functions and structures became more specified, the need to reform municipal laws became evident.¹⁸ In 1875, a national reform of municipal administration

¹⁷ After the implementation of a one chamber parliament in 1907, the House of the Estates could not accommodate the 200 representatives. Parliamentary committee meetings were still held in the building, which also housed the Library of Parliament until the new parliament building was completed in 1931. For the next half century, the building was known as the House of Learned Societies, housing the offices and libraries of some sixty-five societies. The House also served as a venue for various events hosted by these societies.

¹⁸ Klinge et al., *Helsinki*, 62–63.

marked a change in urban planning. The city's administrative duties were transferred to the newly established city council, which now became the central urban administrative body. The elected city council, consisting of enlightened and influential men from the community of the wealthy Swedish-speaking local elite, approved the urban plans and the construction rules.¹⁹ The emperor had the final say in confirming the final plans.

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, the planning of Helsinki became, like in other capitals of Central Europe, an expression of a Western type of *Kulturation*. The building of cultural and political institutions was intended to promote and consolidate a specific national identity, reflecting in Finland the national reactions to the Russification policy.²⁰ This change in attitudes is visible in the planning of Railway Square. It became the first European-style monumental space in Helsinki, framed by some central businesses as well as national and cultural institutions. Spatially, the new area expressed the union between local bourgeois capital activities, the national awakening, and urban modernism. The architectural styles represented in the square show how European architectural historicism changed into a national style at the turn of the century. The square's early business premises, the hotel-restaurant Fennia, the Ateneum Art Museum, and the College for Industrial Arts (1887) showed strong elements of European neo-Renaissance. The Finnish-language National Theater (1902) on the northern end of the square expressed a strong desire for national architecture, with inspiration drawn from stone architecture, nature, and the national epic *Kalevala*.²¹ And finally, the new main railway station designed by architect Eliel Saarinen (1916) was the first modernist public building in Helsinki.

In the 1910s, when its population exceeded 100,000 inhabitants, Helsinki attained the status of a European metropolis. The city started expanding to the north with the first industrial district, and to the west, where more industries and a port were founded. The peak year of 1888 saw the completion of 127 stone houses with

¹⁹ Kuusanmäki, *Sosiaalipolitiikkaa*, 28–32.

²⁰ Gunzburger Makaš et al., *Capital Cities*, 19–23.

²¹ Lindberg et al., "Asemakaavoittelu ja rakennustoiminta," 12–62; Kervanto Nevanlinna, *Kadonneen kaupungin jäljillä*, 83–91.

more than three stories. They were all located in the five oldest districts. The Paris-style Esplanade Park with boulevards running on both sides and the new large stone house areas were expressions of bourgeois wealth and the expansion of capitalism.²² The park and the boulevard served for ceremonial occasions celebrating the national movements, following the aims of the two dominant language groups (Finnish and Swedish). At the same time, these public spaces became showcases for the appearance of wealthy local citizens eager to emulate the urban rituals, flâneur culture, and customs to be found in the great European metropolises.²³

The years from 1906 to 1908 mark another modernist and Western turn in town planning. In 1908 the new authority for municipal planning, the Urban Planning Committee, was assigned the task of reforming and making new urban plans, improving public transport between the central and the peripheral districts, and taking measures to draw up a master plan. Over a period of just a few years, many new offices were created, for example those of the municipal construction inspector (1906), the architect-inspector of workers' housing (1906), the city planning architect (1908) and his assistant (1912), and the city architect (1907). The municipal models came from Sweden. These architects, educated in Helsinki, belonged to the polyglot and learned generation who reformed Finnish urban planning. Before the outbreak of World War I in 1914, these architects traveled in Western Europe and studied contemporary urban planning: first the German, then the British, and finally the American school. At the same time, they kept their eyes open for developments in other Nordic countries. Young architects interested in urban planning included Eliel Saarinen, Lars Sonck, Gustaf Strengell, Harald Andersin, Bertel Jung, and Otto-Ivar Meurman. They all felt that international shows and congresses, as well as the planning of other capital cities, were important.²⁴

²² Kuusanmäki, *Sosiaalipolitiikkaa*, 159–62; Åström, *Samhällsplanering*, 178–92; Nikula, *Yhtenäinen kaupunkikuva*, 150–51. See also Waris, *Työläisyhteiskunnan*; Jauhainen, *Kaupunkisuunnittelu*.

²³ The same development is to be seen in Central and Southeastern European capitals as described in Gunzburger Makaš et al., *Capital Cities*, 25–28.

²⁴ Nikula, *Yhtenäinen kaupunkikuva*, 191; Kuusanmäki, *Sosiaalipolitiikkaa*, 174–96. See also Sundman, “Urban Planning in Finland,” 524–27. Sweden had a new and progressive law on urban planning (1907).

For the first time since Engel's days, architects as a professional group had the opportunity to influence construction and planning in Helsinki. When architect Bertel Jung opened his office as the city's first planning architect, he found it necessary to draw a master plan for Helsinki in the spirit of Vienna's metropolitan plans by Otto Wagner and the 1910 urban planning exhibition in Berlin. It was based on population forecasts, as was then the practice in Central Europe. Jung approved high construction efficiency and population density for the historical parts of Helsinki, which in turn led to transport arrangements resembling Stockholm's local railways. The city expanded radially to the northeast and northwest. The areas planned for various purposes formed sectors expanding from the center, with green areas in between.²⁵

A third modernist and nationalist phase can be dated between 1908 and 1914. The introduction of the one chamber parliament in 1906 coincided with the expansion of the working classes in Finland and with the processes of urbanization, modernization, and nationalization. Helsinki followed the international debate on the consequences of becoming a metropolis and on unhealthy growth in cities. The general increase in wealth was expressed in increasing planning and construction assignments. In accordance with European models, planning the capital city underlined technological modernity, aesthetic dimensions, urban intimacy, and historical and organic continuity rather than regularity and ready-made patterns. Helsinki had become a modern capital city, which like the nation itself was an expression of local identity, and a participant in the latest Europe-wide nationalist trends. Modernization and Europeanization meant the creation of an urban citizenry and civic society with outwardly recognizable expressions of urban culture. Here, Helsinki was in line with similar developments in Athens, Sofia, Zagreb, Belgrade, Warsaw, Riga, Prague, and Budapest.²⁶

²⁵ Nikula, *Yhtenäinen kaupunkikuva 1900–1930*, 102–9, Åström, *Samhällsplanering*, 174–76.

²⁶ Kuusanmäki, *Sosiaalipolitiikkaa*, 8–15; Korvenmaa, *Arkkitehdin työ*. Architects played an important role in the consolidation of national identity and Finland's international reputation. As a profession anchored in the ideological core of the middle class, architects' works became symbols of social and aesthetic transformation. Internationalization supported the construction of national identity;

Planning the Capital City of the Republic of Finland

Eliel Saarinen's Planning in the Suburbs and the City Center

World War I shattered the old world, destroyed cities, and gave birth to new nation states. Helsinki remained the capital when Finland separated from Russia and became an independent republic in December 1917. In the shadow of the World War and the Russian Revolution, a bloody civil war in the spring of 1918 divided the nation and interrupted social and urban reforms for some time. During these tumultuous years in Helsinki, the works of architect Eliel Saarinen played a tremendous role. For Saarinen, the 1910s were a period of great town plans. He had launched his urban planning career with a theoretical discussion of the problems of big cities. Of all his planning proposals, which included the Budapest Master Plan Report (1911), the Canberra City Plan (1911), and the Greater Tallinn Master Plan (1911–13), two projects for Helsinki best demonstrate his ability: the Munksnäs-Haga Plan (1915) and the Pro Helsingfors General Plan (1917/18).²⁷

Saarinen's work fit well into the process of urbanization, modernization, and nationalization in Finland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Since 1910, he came to inhabit a heroic place in Finnish urban and planning history, as described in the architect's biography. It is based on rather vast research literature showing his close inspirational links to European urban cultures, planning concepts, and to names like John Ruskin, William Morris, Raymond Unwin, Camillo Sitte, and Otto Wagner. Based on Sitte's work, Saarinen was able to combine medieval and baroque organizational notions into spatial ensembles that had unique urban qualities.²⁸

These "spatial ensembles with unique urban qualities" presented two plans for developing Helsinki. The Munksnäs-Haga Plan was

interaction was the forum on which a "true Finnish character" best showed its worth. The works of Camillo Sitte, Joseph Stübben, Werner Hegemann, and Raymond Unwin were well-known in Finland.

²⁷ Saarinen, *The City* is worth reading to make sense of Saarinen's urban visions in a situation when the "post-war problem of architecture design" was linked to the global experiences of World War II.

²⁸ See <http://architect.architecture.sk/eliel-saarinen-architect/eliel-saarinen-biography.php> (accessed 6 April 2014). See also Hausen et al., *Eliel Saarinen Projects*.

commissioned by the privately owned M.G. Stenius Land Development Company, in which Saarinen was a shareholder. This grandiose plan was presented to the public in the fall of 1915 in the form of a book and an exhibition with models and drawings. The plan covered 860 hectares outside the city limits to the northwest of Helsinki. This plan merged the principles of a garden city and big city planning. It included thorough population prognoses, and the growth of traffic and ensuing arrangements were carefully studied. The Munksnäs-Haga Plan, with its axial order, residential squares, large apartment blocks, and reconciliation of the demands of the automobile with the needs of pedestrians, presents a coherent urban and architectural totality.²⁹ The theoretical section includes a survey of the history of town planning and of contemporary currents: English garden city ideas are discussed and the plans of Letchworth, Port Sunlight, and Bournville in England are presented.³⁰

The Munksnäs-Haga Plan showed a modern European approach to city planning. According to Saarinen's prognoses, Munksnäs would have at its height 83,500 inhabitants by 1945. The social status division followed the nineteenth-century European pattern "for different social classes." The area was planned to house the wealthy (25%), the middle classes (30%), and workers (45%). Detached houses and row houses were planned by the bay and the middle class was placed north of the existing railway station. Workers were supposed to live next to the industrial areas. High-rise blocks were planned as closed structures, but the inner yards had to be spacious. Saarinen also introduced one of the first row houses to Finland. Of these large-scale plans, only a fraction was realized. Only two buildings planned by Saarinen were ultimately built: Munksnäs Pension (1920, later the Cadet School) and a row house close by (1920).

However, the Munksnäs-Haga Plan strongly influenced planners in the 1920s.³¹ The other urban plan drawn up in 1918 by Saarinen,

²⁹ Eliel Saarinen, *Munkkiniemi-Haaga ja Suur-Helsinki: tutkimuksia ja ehdotuksia kaupunkijärjestelyn alalta* (Helsinki: M.G. Stenius, 1915) was published in both Finnish and Swedish.

³⁰ Sundman, "Urban Planning in Finland," 76–77.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 78.

Bertel Jung, and Einar Sjöström was also influential. Jung, the former Helsinki city planner, was at that time planner for the garden city company AB Brändö Villastad. Brändö was planned under Jung's aegis to become the Eastern counterpart to Munksnäs-Haga.³² The new plan by Saarinen, Jung, and Sjöstedt was a general plan for the whole capital city, and was entitled Pro Helsingfors. The plan was commissioned by the commercial counselor Julius Tallberg, a business magnate and a background force in municipal policy. Tallberg's order must be seen as the last display of strength of the "enlightened bourgeoisie" in urban planning, as after 1919 the one man, one vote principle brought socialists into the city council.³³

In the preface to the Pro Helsingfors Plan, Jung wrote that the city's officials would not have been able to produce a similar comprehensive plan providing a vision for a future Helsinki metropolitan area. It is based on the English garden city model adapted to the existing urban structure and the conditions of land ownership. It was the first (and only) modern master plan for Helsinki drawn up in the 1910s that followed international trends. Behind the 1918 plan one can find the goal of housing the growing population: according to the forecast, Helsinki would have 370,000 inhabitants in 1945. The metropolitan atmosphere was manifested in the extension of the central business district by filling in Töölö Bay and moving the railway station north to Pasila. A new central road, Kunigasavenue (King's Avenue), united the old and the new railway station neighborhoods and symbolized Helsinki's political role as a national center. The avenue's name was also a reminder of the monarchist dreams nourished among certain bourgeois circles in Finland in the spring of 1918, closely linked to dreams of having a German prince as the King of Finland. Later that year, after the collapse of the German Empire, the name was changed first to Val-

³² Kolbe, *Kulosaari*, 150–60.

³³ Bertel Jung, *Pro Helsingfors: Ett förslag till stadsplan för Stor-Helsingfors utarbetat av Eliel Saarinen m.fl.* (Helsingfors: Pro Helsingfors Stiftelsen, 1918). In Saarinen and Jung's plans, Helsinki expanded along the suburban railways, along separate "exit roads," and the local road network to the east and west. Parts of the areas were reserved for manufacturing whilst other parts became villa-like suburban zones or densely inhabited urban housing centers.

takunnankatu (Nation Street), and then to Vapaudenkatu (Freedom Street).

The plan had several aspects that related to Helsinki's future development. It created a new vision of an administrative, commercial, and industrial center for the newly independent Finland. As Helsinki is located on a peninsula, King's Avenue allowed the city to expand both to the northeast and the northwest. Saarinen and his colleagues succeeded in creating a radically new urban structure. Helsinki was no longer locked within its boundaries. According to the plan, the traditional semi-circular town was developed concentrically, focusing on the new urban center at Pasila. This also connected well with the Munksnäs-Haga Plan: it would now be closer to the planned new city center.

However, given the political situation of the time, the young national capital could not realize the plan. Municipal resources were limited and state finances were directed toward other activities. Acquiring land was the only possible way to act in planning grander dimensions. Private landowning companies, governed by the profit motive, were not willing to sell land. Saarinen's brilliant vision was now just a dream and a disappointment, and in 1924 the architect moved to the United States for good.³⁴ Although Pro Helsingfors did not have a lawful mandate, Saarinen and Jung's principles were to influence the development of the capital throughout the twentieth century. Among the major problems to be solved was the matter of the central rail yard, housing, and the planning of a new city center. In 1923 city officials outlined a master plan. Töölönlahti Bay was partially filled, but the resistance of the state railways prevented the transfer of the main railway station. The question of a modern city center remained unresolved.³⁵

Helsinki: The National Capital after 1917

After 1917, newly independent Finland strove to establish its identity and demonstrate its membership among other industrialized European nations. The question concerning the House of Diet arose after a

³⁴ Sundman, "Urban Planning in Finland," 78–79.

³⁵ See also *Helsinki suunnittelee*.

sudden and almost revolutionary change in the system of political representation in Finland in 1906. Above all, there was a need for a chamber where all 200 deputies could assemble in plenary sessions. Alternative solutions were either to expand the existing House of Estates or to build a completely new parliament building.³⁶ From 1907 to 1930, Parliament met in rented premises.³⁷ After a lengthy process of debate and competitions, the final decision was made after the attaining of independence to place the building close to the railway station, on Arcadia Hill, close to the Töölönlahti Bay area. The building was officially inaugurated in March 1931.

The symbolic value of the Töölönlahti Bay area grew when the planning of the most important political buildings of the new republic started in the 1920s. The parliament building was a new institutional and democratic symbol, positioned away from the Russian and imperial Senate Square. As a monument to democracy, Parliament House is a work of art in which architecture, industrial design, workmanship, and art form a harmonious whole. The interior is classical for the most part, but functionalism and Art Deco are visible in some details. Monumentality caused some problems. It was difficult to combine organically the overdimensioned and idealized mass of Parliament House with its modest surroundings. The result was a lonely stone castle with strong foundations anchoring it to a rock outcrop. The architecture sought national and material stability. The front staircase linked the building with the main street. The whole composition speaks the same national language found in the older architecture of Helsinki.³⁸

After independence, the “Russian” or “Eastern” architectural presence was visible in the neo-classical city center. After 1917 the main imperial buildings were used as they were originally intended: for government, academic life, military use, and civil service. The nationalization of Russian architecture unfolded without any major dramatic interventions. During the German occupation in the spring of 1918, the Germans demanded that the city remove Russian street

³⁶ An excellent presentation of this period including an English summary is in Westerborg, *Folkets suveränitet förstenad*, 316–18.

³⁷ Hakala-Zilliacus, *Suomen eduskuntatalo*, 311–22.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 91–100.

signs.³⁹ Later in the 1920s, the monogram “A I” was demolished from the university façade and Emperor Alexander I’s statue was removed from the university’s festivity hall. The Chapel of Peace was destroyed by right-wing students. Otherwise, the transformation of the Russian provincial capital city into the Finnish capital city unfolded rather peacefully, as the history of the Imperial Palace indicates. Under the aggravated political conditions of World War I, the residence was converted into the Military Hospital of the Finnish Senate. In 1917/18, the revolutionary council of soldiers and workers resided in the building. During the very first years of independence, one of the upper floors served as Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the early years of the 1920s, it became the Presidential Palace of the Republic of Finland, and continues to serve in this function. After independence Alexander Theater became the home of the Finnish Opera and Ballet. Alexander Gymnasium is today owned by the university and currently houses the Natural History Museum. Military buildings are owned by the Finnish military and today function as originally intended.

After independence the skyline of Helsinki’s urban waterfront was dominated by two cathedrals—the Lutheran and the Greek Orthodox. The Greek Orthodox Cathedral, originally a Russian icon, is considered to be a symbol of the national capital. This panorama had been recorded on photograph and film, both documentary and fictional. As part of Helsinki’s urban heritage, it is now paradoxically classified as the “old town.” The whole area of the city center has traditionally comprised a large variety of urban activities and venues such as commerce, entertainment, shops, restaurants, and coffee houses.⁴⁰

Rapid urban growth and industrialization started to threaten the uniformity of the former Russian city center with pressure to increase the height of buildings and plot sizes. During the 1930s the city and the state bought the buildings on Market Square that were still in private ownership in order to preserve the view and the local identity. As the purchases were completed, the area between Senate Square and Market Square changed its character, with formerly private houses being converted into administrative offices for pub-

³⁹ Kolbe et al., *Helsinki 1918*, 115.

⁴⁰ Kervanto Nevanlinna, “Classified Urban Spaces,” 23–26.

lic institutions. The most interesting development concerns Helsinki City Hall. The capital city's leading hotel Societetshuset occupied the building until 1913. The City had purchased the site in 1901 with the intention of building a new town hall. The plans were, however, delayed and the City Hall project lay dormant for another two decades. In the end the building was saved from demolition and fully refurbished to suit its new role in the early 1930s.⁴¹

When Finland gained independence in 1917, Helsinki had kept its political status as the country's capital, whereupon the emergence of local democracy, the extension of the powers of local authorities, and the scope of the local economy and the new types of social problems that came to the fore called for cooperation across political divides. This meant that the council's social planning goals were combined with those of welfare and the provision of local authority services. During the 1920s Helsinki was increasingly perceived in terms of segregated functions due to changes both in the urban spaces and in their interpretation. Functional classifications of city space became the guiding principle of urban planning practices, as was already evident in the Saarinen plans.⁴²

In the 1920s and 1930s Helsinki was planned and built in the classical and later the functionalist spirit. A simplifying, artless, and conservative classicism and a functionalism that expressed equality and efficiency matched the needs of the new republic both in the center and in new housing. More attention was paid to traffic conditions, and the growth of car traffic necessitated better street surfacing. In the 1920s the city also concentrated on extending its already existing communication and traffic networks. By the 1920s and 1930s most of Helsinki's tramlines were finally completed, both in the city center and to newly developed suburbs.⁴³

⁴¹ Kolbe et al., *Helsinki City Hall*, 45–55. Sessions of the Helsinki City Council were held at City Hall between 1932 and 1965. From 1965 to 1970, the building was completely renovated under the direction of Professor Aarno Ruusuvuori in the contemporary architectural spirit. Only the main hall, the façade and the entrance colonnade were restored to their original glory; the rest was rebuilt. City Hall nowadays houses the City offices. The main hall is mostly used for receptions and official entertaining.

⁴² Kervanto Nevanlinna, "Classified Urban Spaces," 27.

⁴³ Bell et al., *Helsinki: The Innovative City*, 187–88.

Originally it was the uncontrolled suburban development around the great cities that in 1919 triggered the preparation of the Town Planning Act, which came into force in 1932. A new administrative body, the municipal administration had a strong position. It could bring greater efficiency to urban planning.⁴⁴ The main purpose of the Town Planning Act was to regulate the economic relations between private landowners and the municipality. A new instrument of control was introduced in the form of town planning regulations, innovations which were copied directly from Swedish law with the idea of promoting a good standard type of building.⁴⁵

At the time when the act came into force, the problems with the working-class suburbs were worse than ever. Economic decline during World War I and the dramatic Finnish Civil War in 1918 changed the political climate. Already in 1916, the city social board noted that families with many children needed housing, and proposed to the city council that a cooperative housing association for the working population should be founded. The Civil War postponed the commencement of plans until 1920, but fortunately (and owing to excursions to England led by architect Akseli Toivonen) by that time the idea of multistoried housing areas constructed of stone had become assimilated into a combination of English-type garden cities and small-town Finnish milieu. The demands of healthy and good-quality working-class suburbs were given shape in Käpylä, which was incorporated into the city of Helsinki in 1906. This area of wooden buildings, planned in the style of Nordic classicism, became a model workers' housing area designed by architect Martti Välikangas between 1920 and 1925.⁴⁶ Käpylä became the Helsinki synthesis of all major European environmental impulses of the 1920s.

In addition to housing shortage, other problems abounded in the suburbs around Helsinki during the 1920s and 1930s. Public services were neglected, traffic conditions were unsatisfactory, and

⁴⁴ Nikula, *Yhtenäinen kaupunkikuva*, 278–83. Jauhiainen, *Kaupunkisuunnittelu*, 268–70.

⁴⁵ Sundman, "Urban Planning in Finland," 80.

⁴⁶ Vainio, *Hyvä paikka ihmiselle* provides a good presentation of the building and planning of Käpylä.

water supply and sewers were badly organized. Helsinki acquired the properties of landowning companies one by one, becoming the major landowner in its neighboring municipalities. The real urban and city planning of these areas started after 1946, when the suburban zone was completely incorporated into Helsinki.⁴⁷ During the interwar period, Helsinki expanded to the north into the areas of Töölö and Vallila. Pattern design became part of the planning praxis in Helsinki and the individualistic attitudes of the turn of the century had to yield to the grand and unified. The urban scene in Vallila and Töölö was remarkably uniform, where a *Jugend* plan in the spirit of Sitte became a reality thirty years later with buildings in neo-classical or modern functionalist style.⁴⁸

The most important planning task from the national point of view in Helsinki was the redevelopment of the republican core in the Töölönlahti Bay area. Saarinen's grand-scale conception was now studied in detail when the City of Helsinki announced a competition in 1924. Architect Oiva Kallio's winning entry was a vision of a great city with magnificent buildings, monumental open places, and splendid vistas. The metropolitan image was strong, with airplanes and cars creating the illusion of a modern city. Pulsating city life was to be seen in the high-rise buildings of the business center. The utopianism of this plan was evident, as the height of the urban buildings was traditionally more modest. Many aspects had roots in Saarinen's plan: the linearity of the streets, the Haussmann-inspired monumentality, and the vertical themes.⁴⁹ Unfortunately, none of the 1920s plans were realized and—ninety years later—the area is still under construction.

With the 1940 Olympics (which took place after the war in 1952), Helsinki joined the exclusive club of Olympic cities. Although the City of Helsinki was the initiator of the Olympic project, the planning of the games was realized by a joint national committee. The games activated urban planning and left a permanent impact on the streetscape. Helsinki implemented functional traffic and transport arrangements and planned the Olympic Village, the first

⁴⁷ Kolbe, *Kulosaari*, 200–204.

⁴⁸ Nikula, *Yhtenäisen kaupunkikuva*, 278–83.

⁴⁹ Sundman, "Urban Planning in Finland," 81–82.

suburban game village, in Koskela. Modern sports venues were planned. The Olympic Stadium was built in 1938, and the horse-riding stadium in Ruskeasuo, the Urheilutalo gymnastics house, the velodrome, and the rowing stadium were briskly built. The Olympics consolidated Helsinki's position as a capital both in Finland and abroad. This sports nationalism, joined with local urban planning, turned Helsinki into a modern sports city.⁵⁰

In the interwar years Helsinki was increasingly perceived in terms of segregated functions due to changes both in the urban spaces and in their interpretation. The commercial focus was now on the western part of the city. Industrial, storage, and port activities were developed in the coastal zones of the city, both on the western and eastern side, as well as in the areas Vallila and Pitäjänmäki. The idea of segregated functions dominated city planning as the first modernist wave of functionalist town planning principles arrived in Finland. In Helsinki, one of the first functionalist town plans was made for the Olympic Village by architects Hilding Ekelund and Matti Välikangas in 1939/40. It was the first suburban area to have lamella housing, an open type of building subtly adapted to the contours of the terrain. The whole area reflects a humanistic approach to the design of residential areas.⁵¹

Conclusion

From the proclamation of independence until the end of the 1930s, Helsinki developed the image of a European capital in which the idea of national identity corresponded with the ideas of statehood and Western culture, based on the notion of the peaceful development of two languages and cultures: Finnish and Swedish. Helsinki was mainly built in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the so-called centuries of capitals. In Helsinki, *longue-durée* structures were developed, and local infrastructure planned by the municipal-

⁵⁰ Kolbe, *Helsinki kasvaa suurkaupungiksi*, 96–98; also Raatikainen, *Meidän kaikkien Stadion*, 7–36.

⁵¹ Kervanto Nevanlinna, "Classified Urban Spaces," 27; Sundman, "Urban Planning in Finland," 84–85.

ity is still in place today. It is an infrastructure that provides the safe physical continuity of the environment and allows space for the development of innovations. Soft infrastructure has managed to support it, and social, intellectual, and artistic networks and informal groups combine public and private interests. Consensus in common interests has provided a forum for creative ideas and local social capital. Seen in terms of cultural and political geography, Helsinki's location on the Baltic Sea, between East and West, at the edge of the Swedish and Russian empires, has been an advantage for the city.

12. Modernizing Zagreb: The Freedom of the Periphery

Eve Blau

At a conference held in Cracow in 1996 on “The Historical Metropolis,” Karl Schlögel made an important observation about cities in Central and Eastern Europe. In an answer to his own question: “What do we have to offer?”, he suggested: “Perhaps there is something that cannot be fully expressed in terms of shillings or marks, something that is simply invaluable: the ability of cities to cope with the transitional situation, to master crises. The cities of the central region have been workshops of successful transition.”¹ In other words, Schlögel was suggesting that the experience of transition, or rather, the knowledge acquired through that experience, is neither new nor particular to postcommunism.

Cities in East-Central Europe have a long history of adapting to and creatively engaging instability. Of course, change is a condition of modernity and most cities experience significant change and unsettlement at different times and scales. But in certain parts of Central Europe, what Schlögel calls “the transitional situation” was the norm for much of the twentieth century. Particularly in the cities that began the century as part of the Habsburg Empire, the transformations—economic, technological, social—associated with modernization, which began late in the region, were refracted and pro-

¹ Schlögel, “The Historical Metropolises,” 14. For a critique of the literature of transitology that emerged in the 1990s, see Boris Buden, “Ein Transitions-märchen,” http://www.springerin.at/dyn/heft_text.php?textid=127&lang=de (accessed 6 April 2014); for more information on urban milieus in Central Europe, see Csáky, *Das Gedächtnis der Städte*.

tracted by enormous political and cultural dislocations into prolonged and recurrent periods of crisis and displacement.² At the same time, it is impossible to generalize in any meaningful way about the range of responses to the lived experience of modernizing urban society in the cities of the Habsburg-controlled Central Europe. Their cultures, economic structures, and political life were as different from one another as were their urban histories. In addition, the transition from imperial to postimperial order in the region was neither ubiquitous nor synchronous. Although the empire itself ceased to exist in 1918, the multinational territorial organization of the supranational state persisted. Even in the new nation states, founded on principles of national self-determination and ethnolinguistic unity, geopolitical boundaries did not in fact correspond to national boundaries, and the interterritoriality of national groups persisted. In fact, only two of the new states, the residual Republic of German-Austria (as it was named in 1919) and the (considerably reduced) Republic of Hungary, could be considered nations based on the Western European model. Conversely, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were officially multinational but with dominant minorities—Czech and Serb, respectively.³ Consequently, the role of the state in urbanization processes in the interwar period varied enormously, even in relation to capital cities.

Therefore, if our purpose is to comprehend the processes of urban modernization in the region, we need to ground our research in specificity of place and time. And if our concern is with the operations of urban architecture and planning in these processes, we need to develop new methodologies for understanding change and difference; methodologies that make it possible to chart continuities and discontinuities, to map relationships between the local and the translocal, and to understand how urban architectural practices evolve in relation to the evolution of the city itself.

² See Blau, "The City as Protagonist"; Laslo, "Modern Architectural Town Planning," 136–44; Kent, "Zagreb," 208–22; Melinz et al., "Großstadtgeschichte und Modernisierung"; Banik-Schweitzer, "Die Großstädte im gesellschaftlichen Entwicklungsprozess."

³ Deák, *Assimilation and Nationalism*; Rusinow, "Ethnic Politics in the Habsburg Monarchy."

This chapter focuses on the city of Zagreb, one of the urban sites identified by Schlögel as one of the region's "workshops of successful transition." The chapter discusses the urban spatial dynamics of the transitional situation in early twentieth-century Zagreb in relation to both the larger processes of urban modernization and the transnational territorial logic of this part of Central Europe during the period under investigation in this volume.

Zagreb is in many ways the perfect site for examining both the generative dynamic of transition and how cities operate within transnational geopolitical structures. For centuries the city occupied a strategic position at the "center of the edge" of the great European empires and multinational states: Roman and Byzantine, Habsburg and Ottoman, Soviet and Yugoslav. Culturally, this was a territory, as Robert Wolff described it, over which "Byzantium, Vienna, Budapest, Venice shone like great searchlights sending out level beams of light and heat, which penetrated up the valleys, through the passes, and across the plains. These beams were halted only as they advanced farther from their sources and encountered effective mountain barriers or met the fierce glare of a beam sent out by a near rival beacon."⁴ In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Zagreb occupied and administered a part of the Habsburg Military Frontier (Vojna Krajina), a zone along the border of the Ottoman Empire extending from the Adriatic to the northern end of the Carpathians. Throughout that period, the boundaries of the territory administered by Zagreb were highly unstable. They were continuously changing shape and size as the aspirations and priorities of the imperial regime in Vienna shifted. Culturally, Zagreb has been defined by its strategic position as a crossroads between cultures and identities: east and west, Christian and Muslim, Orthodox and Roman Catholic, north and south, Slavic and Mediterranean. Today Zagreb is once again situated in an "imperial glaxis," in a strategic interstitial zone at the center of the (outside) edge of the European Union.⁵

The edge or glaxis condition of Zagreb—on the periphery of territorial powers and dominant cultures—has been theorized within the region in terms of the "freedom of the periphery." Ljubo Karaman,

⁴ Wolff, *The Balkans*, 20.

⁵ The concept of the imperial glaxis is borrowed from Maier, *Among Empires*.

the twentieth-century historian of Croatian and Dalmatian art, developed the concept of the “peripheral milieu” as a particular kind of (cultural) edge condition that is radically different in terms of its relation to the center from the provincial milieu. Unlike provincial regions, peripheral milieus have no strong gravitational pull to any one center, but are drawn to many centers. There is a *freedom of the periphery* in the distance from power and all that it entails: the absence of strong institutions and systems of patronage, the lack of material resources and political authority. This is a condition that offers considerable “freedom of creation” that allows artists “to draw from two or more sources and to make creative synthesis in auspicious moments.”⁶ The peripheral milieu is one in which multidirectional vectors offer access to many centers, and in which an “intensification of culture” occurs—an intensification and differentiation that fosters experimentation and innovation and generates originality.⁷ The periphery in this way has the capacity to become its own center.

The peripheral milieu of Zagreb was host to multiple ethnic and national groups with often violently conflicting political agendas. The urban territory is itself a formation not only of imperial duality (Austria-Hungary) but also of local dualism and the hybridity it produced. The city’s origins were two contiguous but independent urban centers: the civil community of Gradec, and the feudal-religious community and Episcopal See, Kaptol. After six centuries of intermittent economic warfare punctuated by armed conflict, the two settlements (together with their suburbs and neighboring townships) were finally joined into the royal free city of Zagreb (Agram, in German) in 1850. Yet the two communities retained their separate urban identities along with their distinctive urban patterns, structures, and functions. City government and commerce were centered in Gradec, while Kaptol retained its religious functions and prospered by increasing its territory through systematic land acquisition. Territoriality characterized Zagreb’s modern growth as well. Each new modernization project staked out its own territory and designated it the new center of the city as a whole.⁸

⁶ Karaman, *O djelovanju domaće sredine*.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ See Knežević, *Zagrebu u Središtu*.

Urban Zagreb is a formation of the modern period. The city grew from 3 square kilometers in 1850 to around 100 square kilometers by 1940. During the same period the population increased from 15,000 to almost 300,000 inhabitants.⁹ Significantly, this was a time during which concepts of political space and spatiality were reconceived (under the influence of the new physics) in terms of force fields, as spaces filled with energy within which relationships of power could be imagined as vectors with both direction and magnitude.¹⁰ In the case of Zagreb, those vectors were constantly changing course and force—from Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade—as the city and region came under the jurisdiction of successive transnational sovereignties: the Habsburg Empire (in which Zagreb was governed from Vienna), the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary in which Croatian territories were governed from Budapest (1867–1918), the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (1918–1921), and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1921–1939), both of which were governed from Belgrade.¹¹

Indeed, for much of its history Zagreb was a capital without a country, the “national” center of a territory and citizenship that had neither distinct political boundary nor voice. The municipality itself had no clear authority over its own terrain or control over its growth. Political space in Zagreb can be characterized in terms of a radical disjunction between “decision space” (the locus of legislative power) and “identity space” (the territory to which citizens tended to ascribe their most meaningful public loyalties).¹² The spaces of power and identity almost never shared the same boundary; they remained out of joint throughout the period of Zagreb’s rapid growth and modernization.

⁹ See Bašić, “Decentralization of the Zagreb Urban Region”; Vukić, *Zagreb*; Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire*, and idem, *The Multinational Empire*.

¹⁰ See Buchwald, *From Maxwell to Microphysics*; Galison, *Image and Logic*.

¹¹ See Bideleux et al., *A History of Eastern Europe*, especially Part I: “The ‘Balkanization’ of South-Eastern Europe: From Ancient Times to the First World War.”

¹² I have borrowed the terms identity and decision space from Maier, “Transformations of Territoriality,” in which he also discusses the impact of the new physics on conceptions of political space in the modern period. The broad cultural relevance of the new physics is also a theme of Eco’s *The Open Work*, especially Chapter One: “The Poetics of the Open Work.”

This radical disconnect between decision space and identity space had significant implications. In the nineteenth century, Zagreb, like other Habsburg-ruled cities, was one of the empire's important provincial administrative and economic centers. It was also a privileged place of history, whose nineteenth-century urban bourgeoisie (*Bildungsbürgertum*) constituted the Habsburg Empire's so-called nations with history. At the same time, however, Croats along with the empire's other subject peoples, constituted what Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels identified as Austria-Hungary's "nations without history," cultural nations with no independent politico-national history of their own. Consequently, in urban centers like Zagreb, where the imperial met the local, the space of the city itself became highly contested territory. It was not only a formation of history, but also a place where history had been, and could be, made.¹³

These conditions present a series of questions: How was it possible in this context for architecture and urban planning—disciplines that are predicated on stability, continuity, and durability, substantial capital investment, and the ability to take the long view—to operate effectively? How was it possible for the city to modernize, industrialize, and grow more than twentyfold in the period from 1850 to 1940? How did administrators, city planning officials, and architects who were charged with planning and managing the growth of the city operate within the succession of different administrative and political structures in which Zagreb was entangled during that period? Did the permanently transitional environment of modern Zagreb generate new techniques for city making?

It is important to emphasize that transition is understood here—not as an episode of instability, the passage from one (known) condition of stability to another—but rather as an open-ended condition of instability and uncertainty without known outcome. There are methodological implications for urban research of foregrounding this concept of transition. If the subject of study is the condition of transition and its impact on architecture and urbanism, then the

¹³ For Marx and Engels's concept, see Kann, *The Multinational Empire*, 43; see further Blau, "The City as Protagonist," 14–15.

object of the research shifts from urban *form* to urban *practice* and with it to issues of agency, intervention, and authorship, which are naturally foregrounded by practice. It is important to clarify here that *practice* is conceived in this context differently from the “everyday practices” and “tactics of resistance” theorized by Michel de Certeau.¹⁴ Rather than everyday practices, we are concerned with disciplinary practices, in this case, of architecture and urban design. Practice in this context refers to the authored production of material structures and physical spaces, and the production and instrumentation of forms of knowledge particular to architecture and environmental design. In other words, we are concerned here with practice in Lefebvrian terms, that is in terms of the socio-spatial dialectic described by Henri Lefebvre as the “production of space.” Space in Lefebvre’s formulation is neither an object nor a subject, but rather “a social reality . . . a set of relations and forms,” and is historically produced.¹⁵ Spatial structures like architecture do not merely reflect (or reify) social practices, they also condition those practices. In this context, the urban (a condition rather than a thing, according to Lefebvre), is a spatial formation in which the logic of form is associated with the dialectic of content, a condition in which form and content shape and transform each other. The urban, Lefebvre contends, is therefore a concrete abstraction, associated with practice.¹⁶ It also has material consequences. This conception of the urban helps us to understand urban architectural practice itself as not only a matter of intervening in the city, but also of reading the city in a certain way—as project and projection. In other words, in terms of practice and the production and transfer of particular kinds of architectural and urban spatial knowledge in a specific place over time. In this way the city becomes a protagonist in the process of its own making.

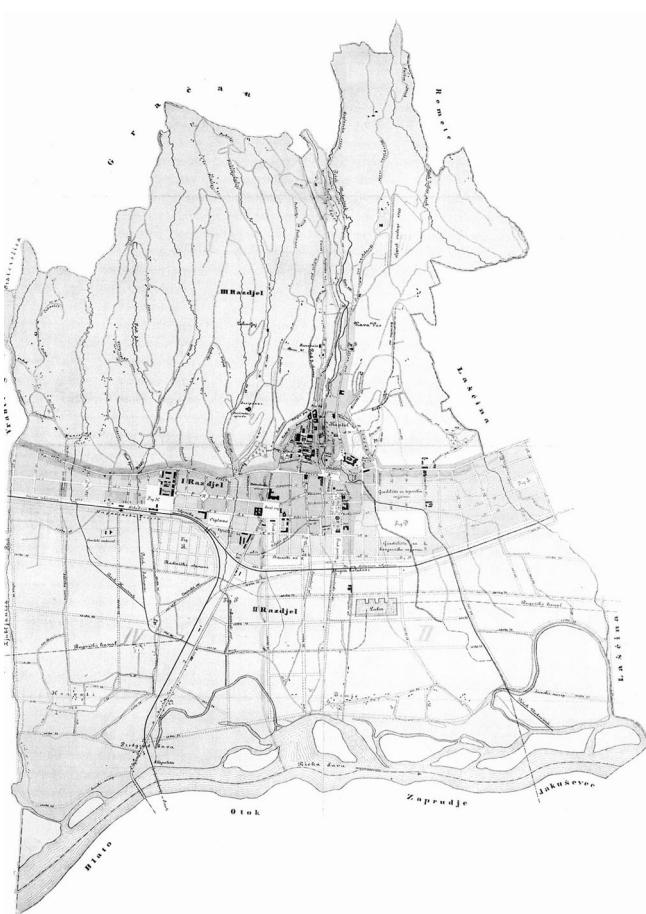
The role of the city as an actor in this process is perhaps best understood in relation to what Pierre Bourdieu has called the “habitus,” the “durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations [that] produces practices which tend to reproduce.”

¹⁴ Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

¹⁵ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 116.

¹⁶ Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, 118–19.

These practices “can be accounted for only by relating the objective *structure* defining the social conditions of the production of the habitus which engendered them to the conditions in which this habitus is operating.”¹⁷ In other words—or, rather, in terms of architecture and urban design—conditions of practice and urban and architectural design strategies continuously modify and redefine each other in the production of the city.



Map 12.1. Zagreb Regulation Plan, 1887;
courtesy of Museum of the City of Zagreb.

¹⁷ Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory*, 78.



Map 12.2. Zagreb Regulation Plan, 1923;
courtesy of Museum of the City of Zagreb.

How did the contradictions inherent in the socio-spatial dialectic of the production of space in Zagreb play out on the ground? The urban regulation plans (*Regulierungspläne*, the official planning documents) for Zagreb tell a story of continuous growth and regulated expansion through a succession of city plans organizing the urban terrain in terms of commercial, residential, industrial, recreation, and other functions as well as urban infrastructure (streets, squares, parcelized city blocks), and infrastructural systems (sewerage, streetcar, electricity, gas, drinking water, etc.) (see map 12.1 and map 12.2).

This narrative, however, is contradicted by the architectural evidence of documents in the City Building Office, archival evidence and photographic documents, which tell a different story: of plans and basic urban infrastructure that remained unexecuted for decades

after the plans had been drawn up, and an urban fabric generated by a series of individual strategic architectural interventions that function urbanistically to prepare the ground for further interventions.¹⁸ Indeed, regulation plans drawn up at each stage of Zagreb's modern development—during the Habsburg Empire, Dual Monarchy, and Royal Yugoslavia—were proposed by local planning bodies in Zagreb with the understanding (even expectation) that they would be opposed by the central authorities in Vienna, Budapest, or Belgrade. And invariably they were rejected or stymied, often for decades. With limited power in relation to those centers, city planning officials and architects in Zagreb had to strategize carefully to achieve their objectives. How did these strategic responses to instability and distance from centers of power play out on the ground?

The process is best explained by examining a few key projects of this kind in Zagreb. The first is the central urban project of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Zagreb's "Green Horseshoe" (see figure 12.1).

The dominant urban figure of Zagreb, known as Zagreb's "Ringstraße," was modeled on Vienna's monumental Ringstraße of parks and public institutions built in the 1870s and 1880s around the old inner city. But despite the similarity, the Green Horseshoe, unlike Vienna's Ringstraße, has no major boulevard running along its spine; urbanistically it functions very differently from its model. Moreover, both the figure and the fabric around it were generated by a process that was radically different from the one that generated the Ringstraße in Vienna. That process tells a great deal about the exportability of formal typologies developed in a particular context that seems similar to other contexts, but is in fact very different. It also helps us to understand how peripheral cities ("national" capitals without nations) that were far removed from centers of power in the supranational state modernized in this part of East-Central Europe.

¹⁸ See Blau et al., *Project Zagreb*. Archival maps, city and building plans, and photographs consulted throughout are in the collections of the Museum of Croatian Architecture, the Croatian State Archive, the Museum of the City of Zagreb, and the Tošo Dabac Archive in Zagreb.

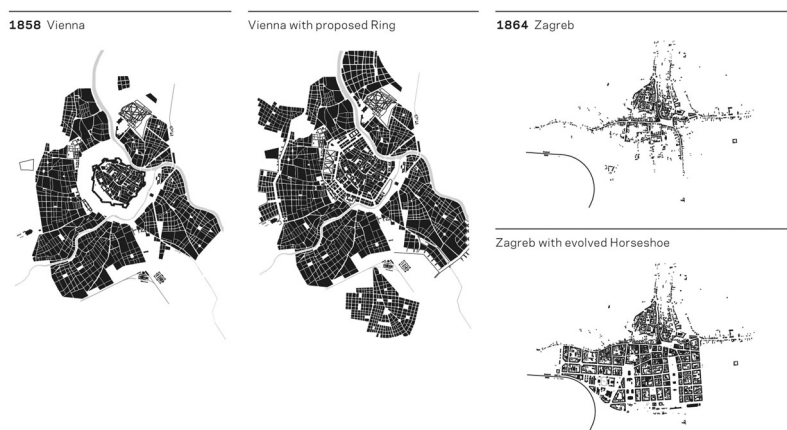


Figure 12.1. Aerial View of Zagreb Lower Town, showing Green Horseshoe, 1929; courtesy of the Museum of the City of Zagreb.

Vienna's Ringstraße emerged out of a very specific set of conditions: the walls and the glacis of the old fortifications were still intact in the 1850s even though they no longer served a defensive purpose, and the city had grown up around them (see map 12.3). In 1858 Emperor Franz Josef ordered their demolition and replacement with a new urban district of public institutions. The Ringstraße itself was a project of the central government, which sponsored a competition, and supervised the construction of the new boulevard and institu-

tional program on Crown-owned land.¹⁹ In other words, the Ringstraße was a modernization project in a clearly demarcated space in the middle of consolidated urban fabric.

In Zagreb the urban logic that had generated the figure of Ringstraße did not exist: there was no clearly demarcated space for the ring, there was no plan, nor was there a program for the quarter (see map 12.3 and map 12.4).



Map 12.3. Diagram comparing the Vienna Ringstraße (1858–1867) and the Zagreb Ring: The Green Horseshoe (1865–1887); diagram by Ivan Rupnik.

The city itself was tiny and instead of consolidated urban fabric, the area in which the new Ring was to be built was hardly urban at all; it was a ragged edge condition, with a few buildings standing in cornfields. The only plan for the area was the coarse-grained grid of the 1865 *Regulierungsplan* (Zagreb's first regulation plan), which had never been approved by officials in Budapest, and the location of the railway lines between the old city and the river was still uncertain. In addition, the city planning authorities were not empowered to designate part of the new urban area, known as the Lower Town, for public use.²⁰

¹⁹ The authoritative work on the Vienna Ringstraße development remains Wagner-Rieger, *Die Wiener Ringstraße*. See also Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna*, 24–115.

²⁰ Knežević, “Milan Lenuci.”

Vienna Ringstrasse 1858–1867

City wall removed: vacant space left



Space "figured" by team of experts



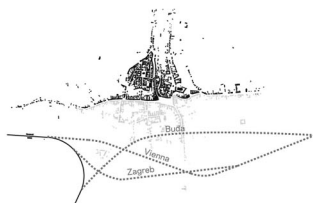
Programs officially decided



Competition held, private parcels allotted for development

**Zagreb "Ring": The Green Horseshoe 1865–1887**

Railway debate between Vienna, Budapest, and Zagreb



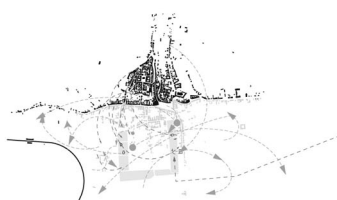
Grid laid for private development; city and institutions on equal footing with private developers



Figure emerges as strategy from the grid; City only owns part of the land



Figure, program, and grid inform one another



Map 12.4. Diagram comparing the Vienna Ringstraße (1858–1867) and the Zagreb Ring: The Green Horseshoe (1865–1887); diagram by Ivan Rupnik.

Consequently, planning officials in Zagreb had to devise a strategy for guiding development in the Lower Town without an effective planning tool (a ratified *Regulierungsplan*) and while the area itself was literally under construction. The development of the Lower Town was choreographed by Milan Lenuci, Zagreb's city

surveyor at the time. Lenuci (1849–1924), an architect and engineer, had received his higher education and professional training in Austria: at the Technische Hochschule in Graz and then in the architecture office of Adolf Gabriel in Vienna. He began working in the Zagreb City Construction Office (as it was called at the time) in 1874, and remained there until his retirement in 1912. The first projects directed by Lenuci involved technical infrastructure: in the late 1870s and early 1880s he designed (in collaboration with Rupert Melkus) a system of public stairs (for negotiating Zagreb's hilly terrain), with industrially produced iron components that made the system flexible and adaptable to a range of different conditions. In 1884 Lenuci designed a new water supply system for the Lower Town (part of the 1865 regulation plan). The Green Horseshoe was Lenuci's first architectonic urban design project; it led to his appointment as director of the City Construction Office in 1891.²¹

Lenuci's strategy was to urbanize the Lower Town by creating a new representational center that would attract investment. Like other city planning officials in Habsburg-ruled Central Europe he looked to Vienna and the Ringstraße Zone (which was under construction when Lenuci was working in Gabriel's office in Vienna). Lenuci also proposed (unsuccessfully) that the railway lines be moved south of the Sava River, so that the city could continue to expand southward toward the river. In the absence of effective legal and planning tools, Lenuci engineered a succession of strategic moves to realize his "plan," which actually did not exist on paper much before the Green Horseshoe had been realized on the ground. He staged events and activities on various sites to prevent them from being privately developed and densified; thereby keeping them public and building consensus for the idea of a "Green Horseshoe" of parks and public buildings. Other strategies included constructing temporary structures (such as theaters) as placeholders, moving technical infrastructure (including gas works) out of the area, reserving space with skating rinks, fairs, and other "event spaces" that could be moved to different locations as the need to reserve space on different parts of the imagined Green Horseshoe

²¹ Ibid. The authoritative text on the history of the Green Horseshoe and the career and work of Milan Lenuci is Knežević, *Zagrebačka Zelena Potkova*.

shifted from one site to another.²² The first prominent permanent institutional structure located on the Horseshoe was the Yugoslav Academy, built off Zrinjevac Square in 1876. In 1882 Lenuci (who negotiated with a range of public institutions to build on the Horseshoe) proposed it as the new site for the university, which was due to move from Gradec to the Lower Town.

The figure of the Green Horseshoe first appears as a distinctive urban form on the regulation plan of 1887. Over the following decades, the Horseshoe became the locus for a broad range of public institutional buildings, including the National Theater, Art Pavilion, University Library, Sokol and Kolo Clubs, Botanical Gardens, and Museum of Applied Arts.

The evolution of the Green Horseshoe shows that the process by which the Zagreb Ring was generated was actually the *inverse* of the process that had generated the Vienna Ringstraße (see map 12.3 and map 12.4). In Vienna the process began with the space and designated site for the new development on the foundations and glaciés of the old inner city walls. The logic of the (ring-shaped) space generated the figure of the Ringstraße. The public program of the Ringstraße, in terms of the institutional buildings that would flank it, was then determined through public competition. Finally, the grid of the private development zone (the Ringstraße Zone) built around the public zone, and which paid for the public buildings, was generated.²³ The sequence in Zagreb was the reverse: progressing from grid (the unapproved 1865 plan) to program (Lenuci's event spaces) to the figure of the Horseshoe that gradually emerged out of these programmatic interventions, to defining its space and tentatively fixing the figure of the Horseshoe in space. The Horseshoe, unlike the Vienna Ringstraße, was a formal device for informal planning.²⁴

²² Blau et al., *Project Zagreb*, 58–89.

²³ See note 19.

²⁴ Informal planning is used here to designate urban spatial projects that may be informed by precise formal ideas, but that do not have the authority of legally ratified planning regulations. Neither the 1865 nor the 1878 regulation plans had been ratified by the responsible authorities in Vienna (in the first case) or Budapest (in the latter).

What is the significance of the strategic practices that generated the Green Horseshoe? First, they are methods for generating the city in conditions of instability and rapid growth, as well as economic weakness and distance from centers of power that make normative planning impossible. They are methods, in other words, for achieving the formal and organizational coherence of the planned city without the standard tools to achieve that end. They are agile and tactical. But what makes Lenuci's interventions significant practices is the fact that they were not only small-scale, limited-in-scope tactical interventions. Instead, they were conceived by Lenuci as parts of a much larger strategic conception of the project as a whole. Each one of Lenuci's interventions was part of a highly strategic and carefully staged plan of action with precise formal and social objectives. Not only the figure of the Horseshoe, but also the development of the Lower Town itself, were components of a larger project to grow the city beyond the railway, to industrialize and modernize, and ultimately to become a modern European metropolis. All of these objectives can be read in Lenuci's proposed and rejected plan for Zagreb of 1907—although, significantly, not from the regulation plan of 1887 in force at the time (see map 12.1 and map 12.5). Lenuci's larger conception informed the smaller moves that created the Horseshoe. Those smaller moves, in turn, modified the larger conception of the plan.²⁵

In this, Lenuci's practice corresponds closely to military strategy, particularly as it was formulated by the nineteenth-century Prussian theorist of war, Carl von Clausewitz. The purpose of strategy, Clausewitz maintained, is to "give an aim to the whole action" of a military operation.²⁶ But because, as he noted, "many things cannot be determined in advance," strategy has to be formulated in "friction" with the constantly changing conditions on the ground.²⁷ It has to be malleable, adaptable, and agile. But strategy, Clausewitz insisted, is very different from tactics. Tactics exploit

²⁵ For detailed analysis of the relationship between the 1907 plan and Lenuci's strategies, see Blau et al., *Project Zagreb*, 58–75, 102–03.

²⁶ Clausewitz, *On War*, 177–78.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 119.

[illegible]

It seems appropriate to adopt the terms of warfare when considering the conditions of Zagreb's late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century modernization. Planning in Zagreb during that period occurred in conditions that can be accurately described as embattled. In contrast to most cities, planning strategy in Zagreb was also essentially formulated on the ground. Because it is so intertwined with politics, planning is generally a conflictive process. Usually, however, conflicts and their resolution occur at administrative and political levels, long before ground is broken on any building project. This was the case, for example, with the Ringstraße in Vienna

(where decision and identity space clearly coincided). In Zagreb, by contrast, there was no local administrative body empowered to make planning decisions regarding future development or the implementation of large-scale public projects. Often political instability precluded comprehensive regulation planning altogether. The conflicts that arose over such plans and projects and their resolution were therefore played out literally on the ground, by architects and planners like Lenuci who engineered the design and realization of their plans by projecting experimental projects into key sites in the city, in order to build consensus for them among stakeholders. Not only planning but also architectural projects, of all scales, needed to be strategic to be realized in Zagreb. This was as true in the inter-war decades when Zagreb was ruled from Belgrade (as part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia) as it had been during the decades of Austro-Hungarian rule.

In the 1920s and 1930s for example—when the 1887 regulation plan (see map 12.1 and map 12.2) was still in effect—certain conditions prevailed that presented both problems and opportunities. The first condition was the coexistence of two contradictory urban logics in the urban plan of the Lower Town; a condition resulting from the neglect of an important step in the urbanization process when the regulation plan was first approved. The neglected operation, which was known (in Central European planning practice) by the German term *Umlegung* (apportionment), involved the conversion of privately owned agricultural land into urban building parcels aligned with the urban grid.²⁸ The process of *Umlegung* was fundamental to the effectiveness of the regulation plan. Because this step in the urbanization process had been neglected, the existing geometry of agricultural land division, over which the grid of the regulation plan itself had been laid, was never fully realigned with the urban grid. As a result two contradictory logics operated within the individual Lower Town block: the perimeter was regulated in alignment with the grid, but the interior in which the original agricultural property divisions persisted, remained unregulated and therefore unaligned (see map 12.6).

²⁸ See Josef Stübgen, *Der Städtebau* (Stuttgart: A. Kröner, 1907); Blau et al., *Project Zagreb*, 45.



Map 12.6. Parallel Cities; diagram by Ivan Rupnik.

In other words, the geometries of regulation plan and cadastral map—organization and ownership of urban land—were not only misaligned but in direct conflict with each other in early twentieth-century Zagreb.²⁹

²⁹ For detailed analysis, see Blau et al., *Project Zagreb*, 98–127.

The second determining condition was the exceptionally large size of the blocks themselves. This was a consequence of Zagreb's limited ability to expropriate land for public purposes, including streets. When the Lower Town grid was first laid out in the 1865 regulation plan, planning officials anticipated that additional streets would be built as the area urbanized and generated tax revenues, the blocks would be subdivided, and the grid would acquire a finer grain. That never happened.

This combination of circumstances gave rise to the standard urban unit, known as the "Zagreb block" of the interwar period: a very large city block with continuous perimeter construction conforming to the urban building code, and a deep and densely built interior, conforming to the preurban spatial logic of the agricultural property divisions. The misalignment was compounded by the fact that the municipality had neither the budget nor the autonomy to carry forward its own modernizing infrastructural project. Consequently, streets throughout the Lower Town remained unpaved throughout much of the interwar period.³⁰

Architects practicing in these decades developed a range of strategies for negotiating the misalignment of property division, regulation plan, and building code in Zagreb. In the 1930s, for example, Drago Ibler (1894–1964) inserted modernist apartment houses in Zagreb's late nineteenth-century Lower Town city blocks in ways that opened the private space of the block interior to the street, made the interior of the block accessible to circulation and commerce, and spawned a broad range of modernizing strategies for transforming the closed geometry of the city block into a porous open field.

Like Lenuci, Ibler had been educated abroad, in this case in Germany at the Technische Hochschule in Dresden. He then studied at the Staatliche Kunstakademie (1922–1924) in Berlin in the studio of Hans Poelzig. Closely aligned with the functionalist ideology *neue Sachlichkeit* and formal abstraction of the German *neues Bauen* in the 1920s, Ibler was instrumental in forming the avant-garde association Zemlja (Earth) in Zagreb in 1929, an association of architects and artists dedicated to bridging the gap be-

³⁰ Ibid., 99, 105, 122–23. For Ibler, see Čorak, *U funkciji znaka*.

tween avant-garde art and socially engaged politics. Many of the members of Zemlja took up positions in the City Building Office and later joined the Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) and participated as "Work Group Zagreb" in the organization's fourth congress on the functional city in 1933.³¹



Figure 12.2. Drago Ibler, architect. Wellisch Apartment House, Marticeva Street, 1930; courtesy of Zagreb Museum of Architecture.

Ibler's architectural strategies for resolving urban problems one parcel at a time generated new practices of organizing and using space in the city.³² Significantly, it was a process that used architecture ("urban active" buildings) rather than planning as the instrument of urbanization. The prime example of this strategy is the pair of apartment buildings on a long narrow lot (the last remaining unbuilt parcel on a large swath of land that had been regulated into three city blocks, but the streets had not yet been built) between

³¹ For Zemlja, see Čorak, "Arhitektura"; Djurić et al., *Impossible Histories*. For CIAM IV, see Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse*.

³² Blau et al., *Project Zagreb*, 98–111, 126–29.

Vaika and Marticeva streets, which had been used as an informal passageway through the block (see figure 12.2). Ibler's buildings at either end of the lot maintain the passageway by lifting their volumes about the ground on pilotis (thin columns, a modernist device developed by Le Corbusier for freeing up the ground level), thereby creating a passageway under the buildings that allowed pedestrians continued access through the block. At the same time, he redesigned the series of workshops that lined the informal route into a covered arcade (a figured passage), thereby maintaining the urban porosity of the superblock while formalizing its urban figure and giving the passage itself architectural coherence. In Zagreb these techniques, which instrumentalize the formal typologies of international modernist architecture to "modernize" the incompletely urbanized fabric of the Lower Town, became known as "parcel urbanism," whereby urban space is shaped volumetrically by architectural objects rather than by a two-dimensional master plan. The result was to hybridize the traditional socio-spatial urban binaries of street and block, infrastructure and building, public and private space in the city.

What conclusions can we draw from these case studies? First, Lenuci, Ibler, and the other architects who built modern Zagreb consistently designed urban projects and buildings that staged the conditions for future moves, with each intervention preparing the ground for further interventions. They are strategies for dealing with a lack of tools and processes for planning. They exemplify the process by which strategy becomes practice. Second, they are practices born of economic weakness and distance from power. In Zagreb they produced urban environments and architectural forms that were both innovative and highly sophisticated in terms of their design and methods of production, as well as their social amenity. The question arises: why?

As part of Austria-Hungary and then Royal Yugoslavia, Zagreb was accustomed to operate within transterritorial city networks and transnational geopolitical structures. Throughout the fifty-year period covered by this volume, the city was enmeshed in a complex, constantly mutating, multilayered web of administrative, economic, and political structures and relationships. As a result, administrators and other key players—including architects and planners—deve-

loped modalities of operation on behalf of the city that were strategic, agile, and flexible. They learned how to channel the connectivity of the transterritorial networks of which Zagreb was a part into the city itself in ways that enabled it to grow and to innovate. Thus Lenuci, who recognized the effective symbolism and urban instrumentality of the Vienna Ringstraße as figure and urban economic engine, was able to translate its urban logic into a strategic device for growing the Lower Town and achieving the formal and organizational coherence of the planned and designed city without the standard tools to achieve that end. Drago Ibler, faced with the problem of building on a long narrow lot, which was the only passage through an unregulated area of the city, translated the distinctive formal elements of international modernism (pilotis, roof garden, and free-façade) into a new urban typological form that allowed him to incorporate the existing informal urban passage through the site into his design, while introducing a new vocabulary of modernist architecture forms and a new kind of hybrid public-private space into the city.

The particular insight provided by these projects and the urban architectural example of modernizing Zagreb—a national capital without a clearly defined national territory, and a center at the edge of empire—is that there is a *freedom of the periphery* in the distance from power and all that it entails: the absence of strong institutions and systems of patronage, lack of material resources and political authority. And so it was in Zagreb's modernizing decades before World War II. Faced with the ineffectuality of normative planning methods in conditions of political instability and economic weakness, architects and planning officials in Zagreb developed agile and flexible modalities of architectural intervention. During the period of intense growth and expansion, they used local institutions and carefully conceived events to open the city to ideas from the outside, and to build consensus for those ideas by staging the conditions for, and experimenting with, new urban concepts and projects. Many of those strategies engaged the hybrid conditions of planned and unplanned, formal and informal development and the diffuse and flexible patchwork of architectural formations resulting from those conditions. The opportunity grasped by Lenuci, Ibler, and others who shaped modern Zagreb in the period with which we

are concerned was to take responsibility for the city by reconceptualizing practice. They learned to not only anticipate and adjust to frequent changes but to instrumentalize instability to achieve their own objectives by developing strategies that engaged the condition of irresolution in which they were forced to operate. Of course, strategy is a mode of operation that does not directly translate into praxis; it can be thought but not reified. But, as these examples suggest, when strategy generates physical form and space—a type of knowledge particular to architecture—that knowledge becomes materially and historically specific. The forms and spaces therefore become open to interpretation, proliferation, and development, and the strategies that generated them become available for application to conditions and contexts that may have little to do with the original context in which the strategy was developed. Through extrapolation (the process by which knowledge produced in a particular context is applied to other contexts), therefore, architectural strategies can be said to generate architectural practices. In Zagreb that process generated an open approach to design. In the absence of strong institutions, responsibility for spatial planning in Zagreb shifted from government to practice—to architects—but more precisely to urban architectural culture: the production and transfer through practice of a form of knowledge that is particular to architecture. That knowledge and the innovative urban architectural practices that proliferated and shaped modern Zagreb constitute the legacy in terms of city planning and design of Zagreb's long experience of what Karl Schlögel identified as the distinctive ability of central European cities "to cope with the transitional situation, to master crises."

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